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1. March 1. On this date in 1940, May Maxwell died in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for which was declared a martyr by Shoghi Effendi. Married to Hand of the Cause William Sutherland Maxwell, who designed the Shrine of the Báb, she was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.
2. March 1. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent a warning to Australian Bahá'ís about Joseph Perdu, noting "It is indeed a great tragedy that Mr. Perdu should have such an utterly despicable character, and the ability to be a teacher."
3. March 1. On this date in 1905, Shirin Fozdar was born to Zoroastrian parents who had converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Bombay. Along with her husband, they were the first Bahá'í pioneers to Singapore. She was an inaugural member of the National Spiritual Assembly of South East Asia.
4. March 1. On this date in 1897, Shoghi Effendi was born in in the House of Abdullah Pasha in Acre to Ḍíyá'íyyih Khánum, the eldest daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Mírzá Hádí Shírází, a relative of the the Báb. Shoghi Effendi entered a large extended family in conflict. By the time of his death...
5. March 1. On this date in 2012, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter "to the devoted believers of Bahá'u'lláh in the sacred land of Iran."
6. March 2. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Hamburg difficulty is not insurmountable, as long as the friends all make up their minds that no sacrifice of personal feeling or opinion in this matter is too great to make in order to maintain the unity of the administrative order there.."
7. March 2. On this date in 2013, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the Bahá'ís of Iran" regarding several issues related to the principle of non-involvement in partisan political affairs.
8. March 2. On this date in 1954, Leroy Ioas wrote Japanese Bahá'ís "The

beloved Guardian is so confident that the Faith will spread rapidly in Japan, and the believers will firmly establish the institutions of the Cause, that he has chosen to send to them for ultimate display in their National ..."

9. March 2. On this date in 1970, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum arrived in Accra, Ghana during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's "The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum."
10. March 2. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...If a person makes it quite clear that they do not wish to be considered an active member of the Bahá'í Community and be affiliated with it and exert their voting right, then their name should be removed from the voting list; but if a ...."
11. March 2. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi "said the Golden Age may be in 70 to 100 years." The Golden Age will itself be a process of maturation, following from the establishment of the Most Great Peace.
12. March 2. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Announce to friends of East and West the following ... historic house of Bahá'u'lláh in Acre, scene of prolonged afflictions sustained by Founder of Faith, as well as supreme crisis suffered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at hands of Covenantbreakers."
13. March 2. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram announcing the formation of the International Bahá'í Council with Mason Remey as its President. After Shoghi Effendi's death, Mason Remey would use this appointment as President as a basis for his claim of being the second Guardian.
14. March 2. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Moslems are exerting a very great effort in America - allying themselves with the Christians - they are not sincere ...Even to the extent of forming ties with the Christians - even with the Catholics, their bitter enemies.."
15. March 3. On this date in 1935, Glenford Eckleton Mitchell was born in Jamaica. From 1968 to 1982 he served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, and from 1982 to 2008 he served as a member of the Universal House of Justice.

16. March 3. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi cabled about May Maxwell's death two days previous of a heart attack, noting "To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added." Six years later, about Lidia Zamenhoff who died in a Nazi death ....
17. March 3. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "He appreciates very much the pioneer services you have rendered. He hopes that from now on you and your dear husband will be able to serve the Faith unitedly and devotedly together, as that is the highest form of Bahá'í cooperation in marriage."
18. March 3. On this date in 1955, Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote "Canadian believers have been deprived of their voting rights...this is the heaviest sanction we possess at present in the Faith, short of excommunication...."
19. March 3. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the primary purpose for which Local Spiritual Assemblies are established is to promote the teaching work..."
20. March 3. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning plum pudding; in fact, in any way."
21. March 3. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice sent all NSAs a republication of a compilation titled "The Individual and Teaching: Raising the Divine Call"
22. March 3. On this date in 1908, the first Feast in Oakland, California was held at the home of Helen Goodall. She had earlier made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908."
23. March 3. On this date in 1929, a League of Nations Council resolution upheld the Bahá'í community's claim to Bahá'u'lláh'a house in Baghdad.
24. March 4. On this date in 1954, Roy Fernie and Elena Marsella arrived in Kiribati, for which they were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.

25. March 4. On this date in 1974, a group of Bahá'ís wrote the UHJ about "laws listed in the 'Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas' which are not at present binding upon the friends in the western world."
26. March 4. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi's sister Ruhanguise Rabbani wrote a letter to Margaret Stevenson on his behalf.
27. March 4. On this date in 1912, the New York Times carried an article titled "Bahá'í Leader Due Here," with the claim that "about one-third of the Persians are now Bahá'ís"
28. March 4. On this date in 2003, an individual wrote the UHJ regarding "the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace" against the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The UHJ replied that "current demonstrations are not intended to promote peace in principle but are focused on ...."
29. March 4. On this date in 1910, Hají Ákhúnd died in Tehran. One of the four Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Bahá'u'lláh and designated an Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi, he transferred the remains of the Báb from various secret locations in Iran to 'Akká.
30. March 5. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As there were no followers of the Bab or Bahá'u'lláh derived from the religions of the Far East in Their days, this may be the reason that they did not address any Tablets directly to these people."
31. March 5. On this date in 1855, John Henry Hyde-Dunn was born in London, England. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi, he and his wife Clara were the first Bahá'ís in Australia and among the earliest Bahá'ís to teach in New Zealand.
32. March 5. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi sent his first letter to the Bahá'ís of the world referring to the mission of the Bahá'í faith and to the formation of local and national Spiritual Assemblies. The letter would later be published in the book titled "Bahá'í Administration".
33. March 5. On this date in 1993, the Universal House of Justice wrote

regarding the publication of an English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

34. March 5. On this date in 2009, the Universal House of Justice wrote Iranian Bahá'ís regarding the Yárán and the Khádimín.

35. March 5. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book..."

36. March 5. On this date in 2013, Mas'ud Khamsi died in Lima, Peru. Elected as the inaugural Chairman of the independent NSA of Bolivia, he also served as a Continental Counsellor and as a member of the International Teaching Center.

37. March 5. On this date in 1985, Lloyd G. Gardner died in Bolivia. He was a Canadian Bahá'í who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada for twenty years, for a time as Chairman, and also as a Continental Counsellor for the Americas.

38. March 5. On this date in 2008, Mahvash Sabet was arrested. She is one of the Yaran, the ad hoc administrative structure established in Iran after that country banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

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48. March 6. On this date in 1937, a letter written for Shoghi Effendi stated "Concerning the prayer for difficulty revealed by the Bab: He wishes me to inform you that it is not accompanied by any instructions for its recital."

49. March 6. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Canada that "Iranian Bahá'ís that while they should not cut themselves off from their Muslim relatives and friends...they should not normally seek out Iranian Muslims in order to initiate friendly contacts with them or teach them the Faith."

50. March 6. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "If you persevere and make it plain to the mother that you will not marry her daughter without her consent, it is quite possible she will become impressed by your devotion to

your Faith, and give her permission. In any case, your Bahá'í duty ..."

51. March 6. On this date in 1929, Ibrahim George Kheiralla died. A founder of the first American Bahá'í community along with Anton Haddad, in the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Kheiralla sided with the latter for which he was declared a Covenant-breaker.

52. March 7. On this date in 1993, Rowland Estall died in Duncan, British Columbia. He served on the NSA of Canada for twenty-five years, as an Auxiliary Board member for Canada for nine years and as a Continental Counselor for Central America for seven years. He had a successful career in insurance.

53. March 7. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the reference to Ishmael is correct, although it disagrees with the text of the Bible. The Qur'án too corroborates this statement of Bahá'u'lláh, and as this book is more authentic than the Bible, it is obvious that it should be given ...."

54. March 7. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Thus in the Ten Year Crusade, we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel...to not only spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, but in this period of the Ten Year Crusade, are actually engaged in the fulfilment of prophecy."

55. March 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "Visit ye especially the city of Bahia, on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because in the past years this city was christened with the name, BAHIA, there is no doubt that it has been through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."

56. March 8. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing the practice of masturbation noting "no sexual act can be considered lawful unless performed between lawfully married persons. Outside of marital life there can be no lawful ..."

57. March 8. On this date in 1930, Shoghi Effendi cabled Queen Marie of Romania and her daughter Ileana, who were visiting Egypt "Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit..."

58. March 8. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "the genetic engineering of fertilized human eggs is far from becoming a reality in the foreseeable future, therefore it does not feel it is propitious or necessary for it to legislate on this matter, or to take up a position about it."

59. March 8. On this date in 2015, the UHJ wrote "interlinear editions of the Bahá'í Writings are unnecessary for Bahá'ís, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation. Those who wish to compare the translation with the Arabic or Persian text ..."

60. March 8. On this date in 2005, Richard Thomas gave a lecture titled "African American Baha'is, Race Relations and the Development of the Baha'i Community in the United States" as part of the University of Haifa's "Lectures in Baha'i Studies" series.

61. March 8. On this date in 1950, Mariette Bolton, wife of Stanley Bolton, asked Shoghi Effendi if an "annual fixed pilgrimage should be made to the grave of Father Dunn."

62. March 8. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Tablet of the Holy Mariner was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. The Holy Mariner is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and the Ark mentioned in that Tablet is the Ark of His Cause."

63. March 8. On this date in 1873, 'Abdu'l-Bahá married Munírih Khánum. By the time of Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957, all of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Munírih Khánum's children and grandchildren had been declared Covenant-Breakers.

64. March 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada," which is the 14th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

65. March 9. On this date in 1956, Albert Windust, a member of the Chicago House of Spirituality and the first publisher of Bahá'í literature in the United States, died. In 1910 he had founded and started printing the first Bahá'í monthly publication "Star of the West".

66. March 9. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote Roy C. Wilhem "some of the old believers who for many years had kept away are not coming back and attending the meetings...Perhaps the friends should take the initiative and make their meetings so inspiring and their activities so interesting ..."

67. March 9. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "we should think of Abdu'l-Bahá and study His life and ask ourselves what would He have done, for He is our perfect example in every way...Also you should pray to Bahá'u'lláh..."

68. March 9. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter titled "Unassailable Foundation of the Cause of God" in response to a "letter concerning questions about the Universal House of Justice."

69. March 9. On this date in 1961, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote the NSAs of the U.S. and Canada "I am convinced that if we start mass conversion of the Indians and Negroes, mass conversions of the whites will follow."

70. March 9. On this date in 1953, Ben Levy arrived in Haifa during which he recorded Shoghi Effendi as saying "Just as the Jews have crucified Christ - they suffered 2000 years of persecution - so also will the Moslems suffer a similar fate. The Jews rejected Christ - the Moslems Bahá'u'lláh ...."

71. March 9. On this date in 1953, Marguerite Sears left Haifa after her Bahá'í Pilgrimage, during which she recorded Shoghi Effendi as making a number of historical, political, and theological observations as well as his making predictions for the the immediate future.

72. March 9. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, interior view, slide...all these slides are destroyed... send me the name of the person in America who sent the slide to the Bahá'í in England. This will permit me to stop the exodus of these slides at the source...."

73. March 9. On this date in 1987, the UHJ wrote about the interpretations, quoting Shoghi Effendi's words "...regarding future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians...can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former

Guardian."

74. March 9. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to "The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Netherlands" announcing that it could not legislate to make possible the appointment of a successor Guardian to Shoghi Effendi.

75. March 10. On this date in 2015, a letter to the Universal House of Justice asked "whether it is appropriate to translate the phrase "Alláh-u-Abhá" into another language for purposes of its recitation 95 times a day."

76. March 10. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' gave a talk in Paris, during which he stated "This is the Day in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the shelter of the Word of God.... This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century."

77. March 10. On this date in 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley" feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

78. March 10. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding the promotion of world peace, in anticipation of the Lesser Peace which was to be established prior to the year 2000.

79. March 10. On this date in 1866, during his exile in Edirne, Bahá'u'lláh moved from the house of Amru'lláh, which he shared with his half-brother Mírzá Yahyá Ṣubḥ-i-Azal, to the house of Ridá Big. He called this the 'Most Great Separation'.

80. March 10. On this date in 2016, Todd Lawson gave a talk titled "The Bahá'í Reception of the Qur'an" at the "Communities of the Qur'an Conference: Modern and Classical Interpretations of Islamic Scripture" convened at Rice University in Houston, Texas.

81. March 10. On this date in 1951, a letter to an NSA said "your Assembly did quite right to deprive all three of their voting rights. Their conduct in carrying out a Moslem marriage...are most reprehensible, to say the

least...other friends may be encouraged in moments of weakness, to err."

82. March 11. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter later published as "The Unfolding of World Civilization," a document included in the book titled "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh"

83. March 11. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Humanity is crying for salvation; and it is only by the Bahá'ís going into the various areas of the world, that it can be brought to them. This is the reason the Guardian has encouraged all of the friends to disperse to new territories, for..."

84. March 11. On this date in 1981, an LSA in Hawaii asked "about the enrollment of individuals who are mentally incompetent, drug users, alcoholics, etc."

85. March 11. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice wrote in response to a question about a reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

86. March 11. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The greatest gift that we can give to the poor and the down-trodden is to aid to build up the divine institutions inaugurated in this day by Bahá'u'lláh as these institutions, and this World Order when established, will eliminate the ...."

87. March 11. On this date in 2011, a parent of a homosexual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a "struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings" with their personal views.

88. March 11. On this date in 1988, Alessandro Bausani died in Rome. He was a noted Italian Orientalist and convert to the Bahá'í Faith.

89. March 11. On this date in 2019, the Bahá'í International Community presented a statement, "Creating the World Anew: Leaving No One Behind", at the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York City.

90. March 11. On this date in 1970, the NSA of Canada wrote the UHJ concerning difficulties "in getting the Indian believers on reservations to hold regular Nineteen Day Feasts" to which the response stated "to

indigenous believers it is important that the process of weaning them away from the old ..."

91. March 11. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Just as the Jews have crucified Christ - they suffered 2000 years of persecution - so also will the Moslems suffer a similar fate. The Jews rejected Christ - the Moslems Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause."

92. March 11. On this date in 1953, "Amelia Bowman asked about Pakistan and the Guardian explained that though Moslem - this is no doubt temporary and will be absorbed later by the Republic of India. The Bahá'ís have a very great struggle there in the East."

93. March 11. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "...There are many Presbyterian and Anglican Missionaries in Persia. Its culmination will end with the Pope. His opposition will lead to his downfall. By opposing the Faith he will plant the seeds to his own downfall."

94. March 11. On this date in 1896. Yvonne Liegois was born in Paris, France. She would later move to Bolivia where she became a Bahá'í. Although Marina Núñez del Prado was the first Bolivian Bahá'í, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia.

95. March 12. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Life is not easy for the young people of this generation... find before themselves nothing but failures, and see in the future nothing but darkness. What they need is the light manifested by Bahá'u'lláh..."

96. March 12. On this date in 1921, Gloria ʻAlá'í was born to the prominent ʻAlá'í family in Tehran. Her father was Rahmatu'llah Khan 'Ala'i and a cousin was Suhayl Ahmad ʻAlá'í, whose father was Ni'mat'u'lláh, brother of Shu'á'u'lláh. Gloria would marry Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faizi.

97. March 12. On this date in 2003, Elsa Scola Bausani died. She was a member of the NSA of Italy, and a bride in the first Bahá'í marriage in Italy, to Alessandro Bausani on October 27, 1951.

98. March 12. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to "The

beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia" calling for the establishment of local and national Bahá'í funds.

99. March 12. On this date in 1923, as an addendum to his letter to Western Bahá'ís, Shoghi Effendi wrote about the "Transliteration of Bahá'í Terms" noting a "list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated..."

100. March 12. On this date in 1983, Yad'u'llah Mahmudnizhad, father of Mona Mahmudnizhad, was executed.

101. March 13. On this date in 1986, a letter written on behalf of the UHJ quoted Shoghi Effendi, "When Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet."

102. March 13. On this date in 1945, Siyyid Mustafá Rúmí, posthumously named a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi, was killed by a mob in a village in the Kungyangon district of Burma.

103. March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Moslems and Christians are forming a religious front against a common foe - Communism. They join in an unholy alliance....They cannot even think clearly - they are confused, they are afraid...The U.S. is afraid..."

104. March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Moslems are exerting a very great effort in America - allying themselves with the Christians - they are not sincere - but compromise their principles. The building of the Mosque in Washington D.C. is a direct result from our building ...."

105. March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said of the Islands of the South Pacific "They are inhabited by the Brown Race. They are very important, very promising. the Cause has been revealed to the white, the yellow and black - but little amongst the brown."

106. March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Tibet is the roof of the

world...It is very difficult for the Cause there. It has a theocratic government - a government run by monks. It is a stronghold of religious orthodoxy - a stronghold of the Buddhist Faith. It will be difficult to ...."

107. March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Portrait of the Bab will be shown in Stockholm. You must tell the German friends about this - for it will act as a stimulus for them to attend. The Portrait of the Bab is to be shown at Wilmette, then Stockholm, and also at New Delhi in ..."

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109. March 13. On this date in 1912, Robert Quigley was born in New York City. He served on the NSAs of South Africa and of the U.S. and as an Auxiliary Board member for Africa. He collaborated with William Sears to produce audio-visual material, books, plays, and films related to the Bahá'í Faith.

110. March 13. On this date in 2002, Elena Maria Marsella died in Kailua, Hawaii. She was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Gilbert and Ellice Islands with her husband, Roy Fernie and served on the NSA of Central America and the Antilles, on the NSA of Hawaii, and as a Counsellor for Northeast Asia

111. March 13. On this date in 1847, Helen Goodall, later a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born. In 1908 she had made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908."

112. March 13. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your questions: We cannot possibly add names of people we (or anyone else) think might be Lesser Prophets to those found in the Qur'an, the Bible and our own Scriptures. For only these can we consider authentic Books."

113. March 13. On this date in 1925, the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims from Australia and New Zealand arrived in Haifa. The party consisted of Effie Baker, Margaret Stevenson, and the Blundells (Sarah, Ethel, and Hugh)

114. March 14. On this date in 1980, the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper published a letter from Swiss ex-Bahá'í Francesco Ficicchia. In 1995 Udo Schaefer authored "Desinformation als Methode" as a refutation to Ficicchia's "Der Bahá'ismus".

115. March 14. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...it should not surprise the scientist that Abdu'l-Bahá states that copper can be transmuted into gold...The same holds true of the statement of Bahá'u'lláh in the Iqan, regarding transmutation of copper into gold after seventy years..."

116. March 14. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote ".... Most Great Peace... by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í super-state...."

117. March 14. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "...it should not be so much a matter of whether a practicing homosexual can be a Bahá'í as whether, having become a Bahá'í, the homosexual can overcome his problem through knowledge of the teachings and reliance on Bahá'u'lláh."

118. March 14. On this date in 1981, Muhammad Labíb, a Bahá'í author, photographer, notable Esperantist, founder the Nawnahálán Company, and pioneer to Japan and Rhodes, died.

119. March 14. On this date in 1914, Richard Nolen was born in Almont, Michigan. He would become a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Azores.

120. March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Hands of the Cause and the Administrative Order complement one another. Function of the Guardian - interpretation; Hands, protect and propagate; Universal house of Justice - legislate; National SAs - administrate these laws."

121. March 15. On this date in 1948, a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi wrote "On the other hand your actual religion today is Bahá'í, and he feels that Jews should, when they become Bahá'ís, always give this as their Faith, but as their racial descent they should give 'Jewish'."

122. March 15. On this date in 1973, the Mansion at Mazra'ih was purchased from

the Israeli government. Previously owned by a Muslim waqf, the mansion was expropriated and leased to the Bahá'í administration in 1951. The Bahá'í ownership was finally secured through the purchase in 1973.

123. March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Arab-Israel war seemed to threaten the Faith - but the Arabs - the real enemies - were defeated. We were in grave danger - both from external and internal from within."

124. March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "There will always be a number - a minority - who will not accept the Prophet - who will never submit - but only a few - even in the Golden Age. But these few can cause trouble. The overwhelming number will embrace the Faith."

125. March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The function of the Hands is to protect and propagate the Cause...they will have their own boards - committees and sub-committees. They will have Institutions parallel to the present NSAs committees, etc."

126. March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "...that Bahá'u'lláh is greater than other prophets is wrong...all mirror the Light - but in Bahá'u'lláh - his mirror deflects the Light greater - not because He is intrinsically superior...capacity of the people is greater to receive the Light."

127. March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "...an Israeli Branch of the NSA established...Next - through a lawyer in the Holy Land - a Branch is established.... I will transfer land to them...Then this property has the backing of the respective governments...."

128. March 15. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "concerning the exact times at which certain Bahá'í Holy Days should, if possible, be observed in view of the different times of sunset in various localities and also the use by some countries of such devices as daylight saving time."

129. March 15. On this date in 1993, an individual wrote the UHJ about her homosexuality, eliciting a response providing "clear summaries of the Bahá'í view of homosexuality and also discuss, in the context of the homosexual affliction, the nature and purpose of man and the spiritual struggles with...."

130. March 16. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "There is a wide range of sexual abnormalities. ...The Faith, on the contrary, makes it abundantly clear that homosexuality is an abnormality, is a great problem for the individual so afflicted, and that he or she should strive to overcome it."

131. March 16. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote "With regard to Ex-President Wilson and Dr. Jordan, it seems fairly clear that both of these men were considerably influenced by the Bahá'í Teachings; but at the same time it is well to avoid making dogmatic statements that they..."

132. March 16. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The words of Bahá'u'lláh regarding 'a strange and wonderful instrument...' can, in the light of what the Master said in San Francisco, be taken as a reference to the great destructive power atomic energy can be made to release."

133. March 16. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "What Bahá'u'lláh is referring to ... is a far distant time, when the world is really one country, and one language would be a sensible possibility. It does not contradict His instructions as to the need immediately for an auxiliary language."

134. March 16. On this date in 2016, an art exhibit opened in Dubai featuring, among others, the art work of Maliheh Afnan, Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughter who had passed away five months previous.

135. March 16. On this date in 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

136. March 16. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Founder of our Faith - besides establishing spiritual principles - established first, Institutions - second, Administrative principles. Christ did neither. He did establish spiritual principles - but no institutions - no Administrative ..."

137. March 16. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote someone questioning "the use of such terms as "abnormality, handicap, affliction, problem, etc." since they can create misunderstandings. On the contrary, the House of Justice feels that just such words can be a great help to the individuals concerned."

138. March 16. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "to steel themselves without delay to face an unexpected emergency...The anticipated trials will enable its members to plumb greater depths of consecration, soar to nobler heights of collective endeavor, and disclose in fuller.."

139. March 16. On this date in 1969, the NSA of Canada wrote a Foreword to it publication of 'Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum's "Message to the Indian and Eskimo Bahá'í of the Western Hemisphere."

140. March 16. On this date in 1906, Borrah Kavelin was born in Russia to a distinguished Jewish family. In 1950 he was elected to the NSA of the United States, where he served for 13 years until his election to the inaugural UHJ, where he served from 1963 until his death in 1988.

141. March 16. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Majid Din is sinking. He is 98 years old .... He lives adjacent to the Mansion at Bahji. The Master has referred to him in his Will and Testament. He has called him the "manifestation of Satan" ...He is half- paralyzed."

142. March 16. On this date in 1867, fifty-three Bahá'ís in Shushtar petitioned the United States Congress to ameliorate the exile of Bahá'u'lláh, who at that time had been in Edirne for four years.

143. March 17. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi stated "... International Executive ... is but a step leading to the Bahá'í world government of the future, and hence should not be identified with either the institution of the Guardianship or that of the International House of Justice."

144. Baha'i History - March 17. On this date in 1985, Julius Edwards, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Northern Territories Protectorate, died.

145. March 17. On this date in 1988, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The House of Justice has not felt that it is feasible as yet to exempt Bahá'í scholars from the process of review for their general publications."

146. March 17. On this date in 1957, a letter wrote "the Guardian wishes to know if they are residents of Germany, or Persians traveling in Germany...if they

actually are Persian residents, traveling in Europe, then they will have to go on the Persian list... Also please advise what their background is!

147. March 17. On this date in 1924, Robert ‘Pat’ E. Moul was born. An America Baha’i who pioneered to Alaska, American Samoa and Hawa'ii, he served as the first Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska. His nickname was Pat because he was born on St. Patrick's Day.

148. March 17. On the date in 1879, Hájí Siyyid Muhammad-Hasan, the 'King of Martyrs', and Hájí Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn, the 'Beloved of Martyrs' were executed on the orders of Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir.

149. March 17. On this date in 1919, Joy Stevenson was born. She would serve on the NSA of Australia, as a Continental Counsellor for Australasia, and as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre for ten years from May 19, 1988 to 1998.

150. March 17. On this date in 2016, Kannabran Rajagopal died. He pioneered to Southeast Asia where he served as an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection as well as a member of the NSA of Laos.

151. March 18. On this date in 1911, Oothout Zabriskie Whitehead, known as "O.Z." or "Zebby", an American film and stage actor who authored several volumes of biographical sketches of early members of the Bahá'í Faith, was born in New York City.

152. March 18. On this date in 1974, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking "for the Bahá'í viewpoint on euthanasia and on the removal of life support in medical cases where physiological interventions prolong life in disabling illnesses."

153. March 18. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question about the meaning of the words on page 50 of the Seven and Four Valleys: This is a verse of the Qur'an which Bahá'u'lláh quotes; the word patron here means helper--in other words when God misleads a soul, he shall ..."

154. March 18. On this date in 2012, the book Donde Brilla La Luz ("Where the

Light Shines"), is published. The book is about the Bahá'í Faith and the impact that the Bahá'í House of Worship in Santiago, Chile is intended to have.

155. March 18. On this date in 1950, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated, "When you have made them true Bahá'ís, then take them to the community and let them be accepted. In this way they are protected from tests until their faith is really strong."

156. March 18. On this date in 1976, the UHJ sent its Naw-Ruz Message announcing "completion (of) excavation (at) Mount Carmel preparatory (for) raising majestic center legislation God's Faith" noting "over two thousand five hundred cubic meters Pentelikon marble from Greece."

157. March 18. On this date in 1992, Bahman Samandari, an Iranian Bahá'í, was executed for espionage. A letter from the government stated "Although he is Baha'i by birth, his indictment had nothing to do with his belief, and the verdict issued has taken its legal procedure and approved by High Court."

158. March 18. On this date in 1910, Ameen U Fareed translated a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent to the Second Annual Unity Convention held in Chicago, Illinois. In 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled "God's avenging hand struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

159. March 18. On this date in 1896, E.G. Browne arrived in Famagusta where he met with three Azalis who had witnessed the Zanjan upheavel. Browne would go on to translate the memoirs of Áqá 'Abdu'l-Ahad Zanjani.

160. March 19. On this date in 1945, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated, "It is better not to read books by Covenant Breakers because they are haters of the Light, sufferers from a spiritual leprosy, so to speak. But books by well meaning yet ...."

161. March 19. On this date in 1856, Bahá'u'lláh returned to Baghdad after spending two years using the name Darvish Muhammad-i-Irani studying with various Sufi sheikhs. His studies with the Sufis led to his writing the "Four Valleys" and "Seven Valleys". Similarly, the "Kitáb-i-Íqán" contains many..

162. March 19. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The validity of a Bahá'í marriage is dependent upon the free and full consent of all four parents. The freedom of the parents in the exercise of their right is unrestricted and unconditioned. They may refuse their consent on any ground, and ...

163. March 19. On this date in 1856, Jean-Baptiste Louis Bourgeois was born in St. Célestin de Nicolet, Quebec. He was a Canadian architect and designer of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.

164. March 19. On this date in 1954, Paul Haney, chairman of the NSA of the U.S., was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi after Dorothy Baker was killed in a plane accident

165. March 19. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...to represent the Bahá'í Community: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his testament has appointed me to be the head of the universal council which is to be duly elected by national councils representative of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in different countries..

166. March 19. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote Indian Bahá'ís regarding John Esslemont's book "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" that "A few days ago the Kanarese volumes reached him and he was very happy to see them; he has placed most of them in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh."

167. March 19. On this date in 1850, the Báb began to write one of his final books, the Kitab-i-Panj Sha'n, which he completed on April 4, 1850.

168. March 19. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "When the true spirit of teaching, which calls for complete dedication, consecration to the noble mission, and living the life, is fulfilled, not only by the individuals, but by the Assemblies also, then the Faith will grow by leaps and bounds."

169. March 20. On this date in 1999, Keith Quigley died in Beverly Hills, California. She had pioneered to South Africa with her husband, Robert Quigley, who had served on the NSAs of South Africa and of the U.S. and as an Auxiliary Board member for Africa.

170. March 20. On this date in 2007, an article titled "The Bahá'ís of the

Caucasus" about the revival of the Bahá'í Faith in Azerbaijan noted "that more than 80% of Baku's Baha'is are converts, often Shiite Muslims in quest for spirituality at the moment of the break-up of the Soviet Union...."

171. March 20. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!"

172. March 20. On this date in 2008, an email asked the NSA of the US "how Kalimát Press might go about reestablishing its business relationship with the Bahá'í Distribution Service," which was suspended due to "an ideological agenda which is at variance with the spirit and interests of the Bahá'í Faith

173. March 20. On this date in 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated. Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings.

174. March 21. On this date in 1910, the Star of the West published a letter from Charles Mason Remey to Corinne True stating "Since being here in Rangoon we have scarcely had time in which to sleep, so numerous have been our callers, the Truth seekers."

175. March 21. On this date in 1890, Ahmad Sohrab was born. He would serve as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when Horace Holley, member ...

176. March 21. On this date in 1909, the remains of the Báb were interred in a special tomb, the Shrine of the Báb, erected for this purpose by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on Mount Carmel in Haifa.

177. March 21. On this date in 1844, William Miller had predicted that Christ would return to the Earth. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this Christian prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

178. March 21. On this date, corresponding to the equinox, many prominent events in Bahá'í history occurred. An ancient holiday celebrated in diverse cultures, the vernal equinox is called Nowruz in Iran and adjacent cultures. In the Bahá'í context, Naw-Rúz marks the start of the calendar year.

179. March 21. On this date in 1958, nearly five months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land addressed a letter to the Hands of the Cause of God throughout the World announcing "nine Custodians seeking to shoulder on behalf of all the Hands some of those..."

180. March 21. On this date in 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Further Considerations" repeatedly referring to the "twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship" which are "destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions...

181. March 21. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh" noting Bahá'í "teachings revolve around the fundamental principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is progressive, not final."

182. March 22. On this date in 1987, the UHJ wrote "homosexuality...an aberration subject to treatment...doubtless in the future clear principles of prevention and treatment will emerge...persons so afflicted...the underlying predisposition, which you consider to be innate but the Teachings do not."

183. March 22. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As to the question of retirement from work for individuals who have reached a certain age, this is a matter on which the International House of Justice will have to legislate as there are no provisions in the Aqdas concerning it."

184. March 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The only thing we should stipulate is that we do not wish to be cremated, as it is against our Bahá'í laws...The spirit has no more connection with the body after it departs, but as the body was once the temple of the spirit, we Bahá'ís are..."

185. March 22. On this date in 1856, William Hoar was born in Nova Scotia. A Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and one of the first Americans to become a member

of the Bahá'í Faith, he died of myocarditis six weeks after hearing the news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death.

186. March 22. On this date in 2013, Elizabeth "Libby" Bevan Golmohammadi, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Rhodes, and a member of the first NSA of Sweden, died in China.

187. March 22. On this date in 1966, the Universal House of Justice cabled the NSA of the U.S. "Joyously hail fiftieth anniversary (of the) revelations (of the) first of the Tablets (of the) Divine Plan."

188. March 22. On this date in 1981, the ITC issued a letter stating "The Supreme Body has informed us that it believes that both the International Teaching Centre and the Boards of Counsellors can render valuable services in the field of Bahá'í scholarship by encouraging budding scholars..."

189. March 23. On this date in 1997, an email to the Universal House of Justice raised concerns about the translation of an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Corinne True, who had raised concerns about the exclusion of women from the Chicago House of Justice.

190. March 23. On this date in 1939, Sadhij Nassar, Bahá'u'lláh's granddaughter through his son Badí'ullah, became the first woman arrested under the British Defense Emergency Regulations. She was held without charge. Shoghi Effendi accused her of "ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism."

191. March 23. On this date in 2001, a newspapers article in "The Jerusalem Post" covered the "first celebration in Jerusalem of Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i new year," attended by such notable figures as Chair in Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University Moshe Sharon, Baha'i International Community ...

192. March 23. On this date in 1955, a letter stated about "the appointment of the Guardian's successor...He will be guided to make the right selection and in this matter will be infallible, and we must accept that or our whole understanding of the Will and Testament is in error."

193. March 23. On this date in 2005, the Second International Bahá'í Council

submitted its response to the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center in the complaint of the NSA of the Bahá'ís of the United States against their use of the domain uhj.net. The complaint was denied on May 8, 2005.

194. March 23. On this date in 1891, Jessie Revell, who later was a member of the International Bahá'í Council, serving as its Treasurer, was born.

195. March 23. On this date in 1955, Charlotte Linfoot wrote "...in David Hofman's book about...the appointment of the Guardian's successor. The Guardian cabled us that the statement is incorrect in the book. He will be guided to make the right selection and in this matter will be infallible..."

196. March 23. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The conditions of the world have prepared numerous souls for the light of divine guidance, and it now remains for the Bahá'ís, through their strenuous efforts, to lead these seeking souls to the bourn of immortality."

197. March 23. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "A Covenant in the religious sense is a binding agreement between God and man, whereby God requires of man certain behaviour in return for which He guarantees certain blessings...the Greater Covenant...the Lesser Covenant..."

198. March 23. On this date in 1989, the Universal House of Justice wrote "One of the vital goals of the Six Year Plan is the education of the believers in the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, observance of which has a profound spiritual effect beyond the practical benefits for the work of the Cause."

199. March 24. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'í s "Vital significance of preeminent objective in European continent cannot be overemphasized. Intense, sustained, self-sacrificing efforts aimed at rapid consolidation of American Community's recently initiated fate-laden..."

200. March 24. On this day in 1949, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable stating "He was also very pleased to see the contact with the Esperantists is being maintained .... bring the Bahá'í Cause to many of their member's attention. Also, he hopes, it will lead to many of them becoming Bahá'ís in the future."

201. March 24. On this date in 1935, Maliheh Afnan was born in Haifa. A famous

artist and great-granddaughter of Bahá'u'lláh, her mother Ruhangiz, having married an individual who had been declared a Covenant-breaker by 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in turn declared a Covenant-breaker by her brother, Shoghi Effendi.

202. March 24. On this date in 1937, Mary Maxwell married Shoghi Effendi. The newlyweds made a trip to Switzerland and Shoghi Effendi introduced his young bride to his favorite sights in the country to which he would often travel.

203. March 24. On this date in 1892, Stanley Bolton was born in Ontario, Canada. He established the first Australian Bahá'í Summer School in Yerrinbool and served on the NSA of Australia and New Zealand from 1937 to 1958, occasionally as Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

204. March 24. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís "Fresh, ominous rumblings demonstrate the inevitability and foreshadow the approach of the final eruption involving the dissolution of a lamentably defective international order... Responsibility solemn, pressing, unavoidable."

205. March 24. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question concerning the descent of Bahá'u'lláh from Abraham: The Master has stated that Bahá'u'lláh is a descendant of Abraham through a son of his, other than Isaac and Ishmael, from his wife Katurah...."

206. March 24. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "to have the book of Dr. Esslemont's translated into as many different languages as possible...translated and published into a dozen languages and others are forthcoming...Dr. Esslemont's book is in many respects the best available."

207. March 24. On this date in 1943, the UHJ quoted Shoghi Effendi in the Reconciliation of Apparent Contradictions in the Bahá'í Writings that "In the past some of the friends were under the misapprehension that Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl taught that Abraham and Zoroaster were the same person."

208. March 25. On this date in 1957, George Townshend died. A former Irish Anglican clergyman and Hand of the Cause of God, Townshend's "Christ and

Bahá'u'lláh" is notable for the changes made from the original publication to subsequent editions published after Shoghi Effendi's death.

209. March 25. On this date in 1998, Hugh Chance, who served on the Universal House of Justice for 30 years from its inaugural election in 1963 until his retirement from that body in 1993, died.

210. March 25. On this date in 1887, Elizabeth Stamp was born in Bagenalstown, Ireland. She became a Bahá'í in 1939 in New York and on May 4, 1954, was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh when she arrived in St. Helena.

211. March 25. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Efforts unremitting, systematic, and continent-wide in their scope, can alone garner a harvest worthy of the high confidence placed in them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. May they prove themselves increasingly worthy of so high a privilege, so glorious a task

212. March 25. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote "the Bahá'í youth will arise for the sake of God and, through their driving force, their ability to endure inhospitable and arduous...and will promote with distinction the vital interests of God's Cause at this crucial stage in the fortunes of the Plan.

213. March 25. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "the Persian believers...and has not a NEW permission for his going to America written with my own handwriting and signed with my own signature, you must not give him any attention at all. Whosoever speaks with him is a violator of the Covenant!"

214. March 25. On this date in 2007, the UHJ sent a letter about the Bahá'í Electoral Process referring to the responsibility of individual Bahá'ís in participating in Bahá'í elections and mentioning the permissibility of discussing qualifications of membership without reference to personality.

215. March 25. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote all National Spiritual Assemblies regarding the codification of the Laws of Huqúqu'lláh.

216. March 25. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote all

National Spiritual Assemblies regarding plan for collaboration in the field of traveling teaching.

217. March 26. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Northeastern States which is the 1st part of his Tablets of the Divine Plan.

218. March 26. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote an individual about how to go about resigning from his Masonic Order with an explanation not to "prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

219. March 26. On this date in 1952, one day after the death of her father Hand of the Cause of God Wiliam Sutherland Maxwell, Shoghi Effendi appointed his wife Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum a Hand of the Cause of God as her father's replacement.

220. March 26. On this date in 1930, Shoghi Effendi cabled Queen Marie of Romania and her daughter Ileana, who were visiting Egypt "Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit...

221. March 26. On this date in 1971, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking for a "clarification of the exclusion of women from membership in the Universal House of Justice in view of the great principle of the Cause of the equality of men and women."

222. March 26. On this date in 1950, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer referred to homosexual acts as "wrong," adding that "through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap."

223. March 26. On this date in 1853, a group of five Bábís assassinated the Governor of Nayríz, resulting in violent retaliation against the Bábí community. Five days previous, Bahá'u'lláh and companions had entered Iraq subsequent to their exile after the attempted assassination of the Shah by Bábís

224. March 26. On this date in 2016, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter on the one hundredth anniversary "To the chosen recipients of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets of the Divine Plan, the Bahá’ís of the United States and the Bahá’ís of Canada"

225. March 27. On this date in 1997, Hoda Mahmoudi, an Auxiliary Board Member, wrote Frederick Glaysher after his successful advocacy for talk.religion.bahai, an unmoderated newsgroup forum uncontrolled by the Bahá'í Administration. Hoda Mahmoudi currently holds The Bahá’í Chair for World Peace.

226. March 27. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "...knowledge and understanding in the vital field of Bahá'í scholarship will be made by those who...are also thoroughly imbued with love for the Faith and the determination to grow in the comprehension of its teachings."

227. March 27. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Bahá'í scholars must beware of the temptations of intellectual pride...Any Bahá'í who rises to eminence in academic circles will be exposed to the powerful influence of such thinking."

228. March 27. On this date in 1978, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies confirming "that the Boards of Counsellors outrank the National Institutions of the Faith."

229. March 27. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote a memorandum about a reference to the Zoroastrian text Dinkird, or "Acts of the Religion" (dín-kird) in John Ferraby's "All Things Made New", and on the authenticity of the Zoroastrian scriptures.

230. March 27. On this date in 1884, Charles William Dunning was born. He would be named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for pioneering to the Orkney Islands.

231. March 27. On this date in 1864, A. L. M. Nicolas was born in Rasht, in the Gilan Province of Iran where his father was stationed with the French Consular Service. A. L. M. Nicolas was an historian and orientalist, official interpreter of the Legation French abroad, and the first Western Bábí.

232. March 27. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Bahá'í view of 'reincarnation' is essentially different from the Hindu conception. The Bahá'ís believe in the return of the attributes and qualities, but maintain that the...The doctrine of metempsychosis upheld by the Hindus is fallacious."

233. March 27. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote regarding "the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace" against the 2003 invasion of Iraq that "current demonstrations are not intended to promote peace in principle but are focused on a specific dispute among governments."

234. March 27. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Southern States," which is the 2nd part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

235. March 27. On this day in 1957, Shoghi Effendi appointed Agnes Baldwin Alexander as a Hand of the Cause of God, replacing Hand of the Cause of God Gorge Townshend who had passed away two days previously in Dublin.

236. March 28. On this date in 1971, the Universal House of Justice published guidelines for the process of pre-publication Review of Bahá'í publications, outlining several principles and observations addressed to Bahá'í authors and Bahá'í publishers.

237. March 28. On this date in 1912, the S.S. Cedric, carrying 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the U.S., arrived in Naples. Shoghi Effendi, Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn, and Áqá Khusraw were refused further passage by reason of illness and were taken ashore. Shoghi Effendi had a contagious eye infection.

238. March 28. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Promise Day is Come", a book-length letter written to the Bahá'ís of the West, about Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the kings and rulers, and their relation to historical events.

239. March 28. On this date in 1874, Albert Windust, later a member of the Chicago House of Spirituality and the first publisher of Bahá'í literature in the United States, was born. In 1910 he founded and started printing the first Bahá'í monthly publication "Star of the West".

240. March 28. On this date in 1930, during Queen Marie of Romania's visit to Egypt, the "Rumanian Minister in Cairo wired Shoghi Effendi: 'Her Majesty regrets that not passing through Palestine she will not be able to visit you.'"

241. March 28. On this date in 1911, William Sears, later a Hand of the Cause, was born. He wrote "Thief in the Night," which ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of Christian prophecy, particularly based on Seventh-day Adventist literature and the teachings of Baptist preacher William Miller.

242. March 28. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "We need only recall the nineteen hundred years of abject misery and dispersion which they, who only for the short space of three years persecuted the Son of God, have had to endure, and are still enduring."

243. March 28. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "severe must be the tribulations of those who, during no less than fifty years, have, "at every moment tormented with a fresh torment" Him Who is the Father, and...made His Herald...to quaff, in such tragic circumstances, the cup of martyrdom."

244. March 28. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Hosts of Heaven are poised between heaven and earth....for the Bahá'í to step forth...Let those who wish to achieve immortality, step forth and raise the Divine Call. They will be astonished at the spiritual victories they will gain."

245. March 28. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...ornamentation of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, the most hallowed Temple ever to be erected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, and the crowning glory of the first Bahá'í century, is an event of unique and transcendental significance."

246. March 28. On this date in 1998, an article in the Los Angeles Times stated "Members can be found in more than 200 countries. In Ventura County, the membership is small but it's growing and has gained acceptance. Queen Marie of Romania was a Bahai." Queen Marie's daughter Ileana disputes this claim

247. March 28. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote ""The time for the destruction of the world and its people," Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic pen has

proclaimed, "hath arrived." "The hour is approaching," He specifically affirms, "when the most great convulsion will have appeared." "The promised day.."

248. March 29. On this date in 2006, Ruth Katherine Meyer passed away. She had been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to Margarita Island in 1953.

249. March 29. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "should a believer read the writings of Covenant-breakers ... and permit these words to instill doubts about the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause such a believer would then be considered as having been infected by the poison of Covenant-breaking."

250. March 29. On this date in 1999, the UHJ wrote all NSAs announcing the "establishing a Chair for Baha'i Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem...Three years ago, Professor Moshe Sharon began to teach the History and Sacred Literature of the Baha'i Faith, on a regular basis, at the..."

251. March 29. On this date in 1987, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "concerning the treatment of Covenant-breakers in the writing of Bahá'í history."

252. March 29. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no time to lose. The hour is ripe for the proclamation...of the One Message that can alone extricate humanity from the morass into which it is steadily sinking..."

253. March 29. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "He referred to the return of the Jews to Palestine, and said they would first make a great contribution to the material civilization of Palestine and then eventually will (as the Master foretold) come into the Bahá'í Faith...."

254. March 29. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "There are 14 million Jews in the world and it appears they are concentrating upon Palestine and their advanced ideas and wealth will help Palestine considerably."

255. March 29. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís

of the Central States," which is the 3rd part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

256. March 29. On this date in 1996, at the Irfan Colloquia Session #9, Stephen Vaccaro presented "The Good Tree: Distinguishing the Bahá'í Faith From Destructive Cults," claiming destructive cults have five characteristics which the Bahá'í Faith does not exhibit.

257. March 30. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice's Research Department responded to concerns about the translation of an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Corinne True, who had raised concerns about the exclusion of women from the Chicago House of Justice.

258. March 30. On this date in 1937, after his marriage to Mary Maxwell, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Institution of Guardianship...now further reinforced through direct association with West and particularly with the American believers...For my part I desire to congratulate community of American believers..

259. March 30. On this date in 1980, the UHJ wrote "The picture on page 83 of William Miller's book is a portrait of Bahá'u'lláh, but different from the one displayed in the International Archives." One year later, the NSA of the U.S. wrote it "has no documentation verifying the authenticity..."

260. March 30. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote "beloved Guardian warned that the disintegrating process will penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of human society and that much suffering is in store ere mankind is fused by the fires of universal affliction into one organic commonwealth."

261. March 30. On this date in 2010, an article in "The Korea Herald" introduced the Bahá'í Faith as "a major world religion with more than 5 million followers" and quoted Firaydun Mithaq as saying "the number of the Bahá'ís in Korea is not over 200 active believers."

262. March 30. On this date in 1937, Hooper Dunbar was born in Los Angeles. He worked as an actor prior to leaving Hollywood to pioneer in 1958. In 1973 he was a founding member of the International Teaching Centre. He was elected to the UHJ in 1988, where he served until retiring in 2010.

263. March 30. On this date in 1957, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote "People who have withdrawn from the Cause because they no longer feel that they can support its Teachings and Institutions sincerely, are not Covenant-breakers--they are non-Bahá'ís and should just be treated as such."

264. March 30. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "Any believer who arises and leaves his home to journey to another country for the purpose of teaching the Cause is a pioneer. As you know, one of the objectives of every pioneer is to settle and become self-supporting, if possible..."

265. March 30. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi cabled "position German Bahá'í community steadily deteriorating" warning of "granddaughter (of) SubhiAzal...mischiefmaking Orientals...sympathizers of Mrs. White or Sohrab or disloyal members (of) 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family, including my brother Hussein..."

266. March 30. On this date in 1987, the UHJ responded to five questions by Robert Stauffer regarding the loss of voting rights, Mani, Magi, the five-pointed star, and Joseph Smith and the Mormons. The letter concluded with quotations on Confucianism and Genesis.

267. March 30. On this date in 1997, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice about a possible a reference in the Kitab-i-Aqdas to the possible end of the Guardianship, and "the authority of the Hands to expel Covenant-breakers at a time when there was no Guardian alive."

268. March 30 On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice wrote a circular letter to National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa explaining the prohibition on drinking alcohol and giving guidelines on how to approach and impose administrative sanctions on someone using it flagrantly.

269. March 30. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Mormons are a people with high principles and ideals...others not possessing their faith and devotion. However, the very zeal with which they serve their own Faith makes it difficult for them to grasp the greater vision of our Holy Cause."

270. March 30. On this date in 1907, Ahmad Sohrab received instructions from 'Abdu'l-Bahá "that he may let the American believers know that if anyone,

especially a Persian, comes to America without a Tablet of Permission no one must receive him as a Bahai; moreover, the Tablet must be in My own hand."

271. March 30. On this date in 1988, a Canadian Bahá'í wrote a letter to the Universal House of Justice raising "the issue of cultural diversity within the Bahá'í community" as well as "a number of questions concerning the rights of indigenous people such as the Natives of Canada."

272. March 30. On this date in 1933, Arnold Zonneveld was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands. He became a Bahá'í in 1961, and spent 22 of his next 23 years pioneering. He died on April 13, 1983 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, survived by his wife and six children.

273. March 30. On this date in 1976, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong regarding an inquiry about books by William Miller, "There should be no attempt made to destroy or remove such books from libraries."

274. March 31. On this date in 1997, Frederick Glaysher, a Bahá'í of over twenty years who pioneered to Japan and an American Indian reservation, addressed a letter to the Universal House of Justice concerning authoritarianism by the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

275. March 31. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the validity of a Bahá'í marriage is conditioned upon the consent of the two parties and their parents only. So that in case the other members of your family show any dislike or opposition to your sister's union with ....."

276. March 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "Bahá'u'lláh and the Master mention only Local, National and an International House of Justice.....Spiritual Assembly is the name at present for the body which in future will be called 'House of Justice'."

277. March 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "one of the reasons God has given us the institution of Guardianship is to prevent men from crystallizing the Cause of God into a rigid system."

278. March 31. On this date in 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a

court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that...

279. March 31. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The teachings bear no reference to any genealogical tie between the Prophets of the Near and Far East."

280. March 31. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "The law of the Obligatory Prayers is, of course, binding on the friends in Europe, and regular, whole-hearted obedience to this law will in itself nourish the growth of spirituality. Nor should the friends neglect Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation to read...."

281. March 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... believers must do is to deepen themselves in the Covenants of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá.... of the Teachings is not enough. Deep spirituality is essential, and the foundation of true spirituality is steadfastness in the Covenant."

282. March 31. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote teachers "are only pure souls who take the first step, and then let the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh move them and make use of them....perhaps thrown aside by the Spirit of the Cause as useless souls."

283. March 31. On this date in 1955, a letter stated "fireside meeting in the home. Every Bahá'í as a part of his spiritual birthright, must teach, and the one avenue where he can do this most effectively is by inviting friends into his home once in 19 days, and gradually attracting them to the Cause."

284. March 31. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the validity of a Bahá'í marriage is conditioned upon the consent of the two parties and their parents only....Your parents' approval would be sufficient, even through all the rest of your family may violently oppose it."

285. March 31. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "Shoghi Effendi... had asked the ladies of the household to prepare the pictures of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab for us to see. The picture of Bahá'u'lláh is a photo (in sitting posture at a table). A wonderfully powerful face."

March 1. On this date in 1940, May Maxwell died in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for which was declared a martyr by Shoghi Effendi. Married to Hand of the Cause William Sutherland Maxwell, who designed the Shrine of the Báb, she was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

March 1. On this date in 1940, May Maxwell died of a heart attack in Buenos Aires, Argentina. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell, who designed the Shrine of the Báb, and was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

May Maxwell was born in Englewood, New Jersey on January 14, 1870. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell, who designed the Shrine of the Báb, and was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

The Sutherland's were active Bahá'ís throughout their lives. For example, on September 2, 1912, during his tour of North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Maxwell's Montreal home where he presented his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America.

May Maxwell died on March 1, 1940, of a heart attack in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she was teaching the Faith. Shoghi Effendi, her son-in-law, gave her the status of martyr. Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr. But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> 'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal

services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.

Shortly after May Maxwell 's death in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 1, 1940, plans were made for the construction of a memorial at her gravesite. Designed by her husband, William Sutherland Maxwell , and approved by Shoghi Effendi, the memorial was dedicated on May 10, 1943 by the Bahá'ís of Buenos Aires at Quilmes Cemetery on behalf of the Bahá'ís of North and South America.

On May 12 1943, Shoghi Effendi cabled Argentine Bahá'ís he was "delighted (at the) completion (and) dedication (of the) Maxwell Memorial.

> 111-Completion and Dedication of Maxwell Memorial
>
> 12 MAY 1943
>
> DELIGHTED COMPLETION DEDICATION MAXWELL MEMORIAL SYMBOLIC ACT NOBLY CONSUMMATED CONVEY BUENOS AIRES ASSEMBLY CONGRATULATIONS GRATITUDE ASSURANCE LOVING PRAYERS SPIRITUAL PARTICIPATION HISTORIC CEREMONY. APPRECIATE PHOTOGRAPHS DEDICATION GATHERING.

'ABDU'L-BAHA'S
BELOVED HANDMAID, DISTINGUISHED
DISCIPLE
MAY ELLIS MAXWELL
NEE MAY ELLIS BOLLES
BORN ENGLEWOOD N.J. JAN 16 1870
DIED BUENOS AIRES MARCH 1 1940
WIFE OF W. SUTHERLAND MAXWELL
"Laden with the fruits
garnered through well-
nigh half a century of
toilsome service to the
Cause she so greatly loved,
she set her face towards
the southern outpost of
the Faith in the New
World and laid down her
life in such a spirit of
consecration and self-
sacrifice as has truly
merited the crown of
martyrdom." Shoghi Effendi

Comments

March 1. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent a warning to Australian Bahá'ís about Joseph Perdu, noting "It is indeed a great tragedy that Mr. Perdu should have such an utterly despicable character, and the ability to be a teacher."

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Joseph Perdu was a Bahá'í who was active in Australia, having arrived from India in 1948 and earning the praise of Shoghi Effendi for his "enthusiastic support". Perdu's explanations of the Islamic teachings concerning the "day of resurrection" and the "seal of the prophets" from a Bahá'í perspective were instrumental in converting Fazel "Frank" Khan and his family. He and his family were the first Muslims in Australia to convert to the Bahá'í Faith, doing so in 1948. Frank Khan would serve on the NSA of Australia, as would his children Joy Vohradsky and Peter Khan , who also served on the International Teaching Centre and Universal House of Justice .

In July of 1950 Joseph Perdu visited Fiji , and converted some Islamic (Ahmadi) Indian Fijians.

Joseph Perdu attracted many people to the Bahá'í Faith in Australia as well as Fiji, until his habit of borrowing money from his listeners and failing to repay them became intolerable.

Messages to Australian Bahá'ís about Joseph Perdu include those dated November 23, 1949 ; June 28, 1950 ; March 1, 1951 ; and June 3, 1952 .

A warning was sent to American Bahá'ís on August 23, 1950 about Perdu's travels to Hawaii and the United States mainland. A warning was sent to British Bahá'ís on September 6, 1950, about Perdu's having met Ahmad Sohrab .

In the 1950's, Joseph Perdu became resident in South Africa. From Shamil Jeppie 's *Language, Identity, Modernity: The Arabic Study Circle of Durban* ...

Perhaps the most controversial of these was Joseph Perdu, already resident in South Africa, and active in Cape Town. Invited to Durban in 1954, "Monsieur" Perdu proved to be a persuasive and charismatic speaker, a challenging gadfly, well-versed in the Koran and *hadith* , drawing large numbers to his talks. He later offered tafsir classes. But, the unorthodoxy of his views soon drew opponents and he was attacked in pamphlets. His critics were indeed justified, inasmuch he was an undercover Baha'i missionary. With the exception of a few of Perdu's converts in Cape Town, the Baha'i religion was unknown in South Africa and the true nature of Perdu's beliefs were not readily recognized, even by his critics. Suspicions were verified by Mall, who visited Baha'i headquarters in Bombay where he learned the identity of Perdu, who was an Iranian and who had already proselytized in several other countries. The Circle then quietly distanced itself from Perdu, but this episode tainted the group for decades with its critics. Perdu left South Africa in 1959, having been excommunicated by his hierarchy. Jeppie has also published a separate article in the *Journal of Islamic Studies* on this influential figure. (Shamil Jeppie , "Identity Politics and Public Disputation: A Baha'i Missionary as a Muslim Modernist in South Africa," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 27 (2007): 150-172.)

In South Africa, Joseph Perdu employed an indirect teaching method , giving lecture on Islam to Muslims and only overtly introducing those he felt were prepared to the Bahá'í message.

From the book *Heroes and Heroines of the Ten-year Crusade* by Lowell Johnson , pages 283-86...

Majiet (Michael) and Asa Noor

Majiet and Asa Noor enrolled as Baha'is in Cape Town on 3 September 1961. Both of them had attended Joseph Perdu's lectures on Islam along with the Davids and Gallow families. But they, like the Davids , had not been singled out by Perdu to receive the direct Baha'i Message because Perdu felt that they were still too attached to the Qur'an and Islam. However, when the Gallows enrolled they, along with the Davids, the Tarin

and Bayat families, began to re-examine Islam in the light of Baha'u'llah's teachings. Majiet and Asa were the first to declare, followed within a few days by the Davids, theTarins and the Bayats.

Majiet explains in detail how the Faith was spread after the declarations of the Gallow family and his role in it: 'I heard about a lecture at the Avalon Bioscope, Hanover St., Cape Town. It was a very rainy day and I did not feel like going but opposite my house was a bus stop, and I stood on my stoep debating to myself. Along came a bus and I jumped in. It made up my mind for me. I thoroughly enjoyed the lecture on "Koran and Science" given by Joseph Perdu (whom I later was to find was a Covenant-breaker). He delivered a series of lectures and I attended them all. I was much impressed by this new learning; it gave me great thought as it threw so much light on religion itself. 'This same man, Perdu, afterwards, held classes for about a dozen of us. In these he pointed directly to a new revelation and a new manifestation. The matter was so clear that we accepted the the idea but I thought this can only happen in a hundred years' time.

In those classes he never mentioned Baha'u'llah or the Baha'i Faith.

'One morning in late June 1961 I woke up and said my morning prayer. It was a beautiful winter's day. I read one of the chapters out of the Koran that Perdu spoke about. I sat and pondered over these verses and wished I knew the inner meaning. On my way to work I met Toyar Gallow. He asked me if I was still searching for Truth as he remembered that I attended classes with him. I was asking myself when all this was to take place. He laughed and told me to visit him at his workshop [at the Michaelis School of Art] as I worked close to him.

'Somehow I never made it, but Toyar came to visit me two days later. Funny enough, he asked me if it was possible for a new prophet to come. When I told him it was possible, he laughed and said two prophets had already made their appearance. He started to explain the verse I had read that particular morning, a wonderful feeling enveloped me and I knew that this was what I was seeking. He made me promise not to tell anyone what

he had told me.

'Afterwards, Toyar took me to his brother Amien's place [in Surrey Estate] where I learned more about the Baha'i Faith and they told me they were declared Baha'is. I made enquiries about a photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha that was displayed on a table and was told this was the "Mystery of God". I wasn't very happy with this reply as I was not used to seeing pictures of Holy Souls. When I left, Amien gave me the Dawn-Breakers to read.

'All this that I had read and heard, worried and fascinated me and I felt I must speak to others about it although I was warned not to. I met Gabeba Davids at Cassiem's house in Horstley St. I told her there was much more to the lectures we attended [together] and that there's a new spirit in the world. She did not actually know what I was speaking about but agreed there was a new feeling. 'Toyar promised to take me to a meeting. He picked me up at my house in Stegman Rd, Claremont, and took me to Tommy Heuvel's house in Maitland. Lowell and Edith Johnson were also there. I was impressed by the happy fellowship that prevailed. I was hoping to attend all the meetings they had. After the meeting Lowell took me home as he was staying quite near.

'That Sunday morning Amien came to see me to find out how far I was with the Dawn-Breakers. I told him this book was quite heavy reading and I was not used to reading this kind of literature. I walked with him to his car. As he started to leave, my wife and Naomi Rasiet returned from Arabic classes. I told them had some Great News, so we set a date to bring them to his house.

'The three of us [plus Gabeba] visited his house one Sunday and had a class together. We all learned a lot. As we read The Hidden Words I knew that this was nothing but the Truth. That night before we left, Amien showed us an album of photographs of Baha'u'llah's bed, His slippers, the Prison in which He was held, etc. This seemed to have stunned all of us. As we looked at each other we saw the expressions on each other's face that it could not be right as our Muslim belief did not go with such things. However, when

we left, Amien gave Gabeba and Naomi each a book. He gave me the Kitab-i-Iqan to read.

'In the meantime I had ordered some books from the C.N.A. [Central News Agency] and the very next day I received three books, one was Baha'u'llah and the New Era. That night I started reading the Kitab-i-Iqan. I could not stop reading it and found myself still reading when the sun came up.

'During the time that Lowell took me to meetings I met Leon Tarin and took him home with me. I asked him if he believed a new prophet could come. He said "perhaps", as he also had attended Perdu's lectures. When I told him that a new prophet had already come, he said I was mad.The next day I gave him Baha'u'llah and the New Era to read, and the following day he brought it back agreeing that the book was good. Leon was very receptive. While we were speaking Lowell came to pick me up for a meeting and I told him Lowell was a Baha'i. Leon called me aside and asked permission to go with us, so we all left. Leon had now met the Baha'is and was making his own investigations.

'I made up my mind to visit Cassiem Davids and tell him about this new Faith. As I walked into his shop in Stuckeris St., he asked me what is this we were busy with, and I told him what I had read about the Baha'i Faith. Afterwards, Cassiem and myself with Asa, Gabeba, Naomi and the rest of our families had many discussions. At the same time Ismail Bayat also joined in.

'I was now strongly convinced the Baha'i Faith was true and Toyar was telling me it was time for me to declare. Somehow or other I did not get down to it, although I was now more or less following the Baha'i principles more than my own.

'On Sunday the 3rd September 1961 about 3 o'clock, the Tarins were all ready to go somewhere. I asked them where they were going. They said they were going to Tommy's place in Maitland and asked me to go with them. I got a feeling they were going to declare. I knew that I was going to declare, but we said nothing to each other.

'Through all this period my wife was watching my actions, and at one time became quite negative toward me. This did not last very long as I pointed out to her why I was going to become a Baha'i. I asked Leon if I could phone my wife and ask her to go with us, so we picked her up on the way to Tommy's house. When we got there we sat around the table and Tommy came in with the declaration cards and a prayer book and said to Leon, "I believe you are ready to declare," and he handed him a card. Leon took the card. Tommy then asked him if the others were ready to declare. He said, "Yes, my wife [Amina], daughter Qameela] and son-in-law [Abdullah Gameeldien] are ready."

'Tommy asked me, "What about you?" I said "Yes, I was ready long ago." He then asked me about my wife. I remembered Lowell had told me a story of someone who was blamed for influencing his wife to become a Baha'i. I was not going to allow myself to fall into that same situation. But to my astonishment she said that she would declare.

'As I watched them sign I was watching for my wife to sign first, as I remembered that story from Lowell.

'I then declared.'

Soon Majiet and Asa were put to the test by challenges from the clergy and being disowned by their parents and relatives. Majiet lost his job as he was also a tailor like Cassiem Davids, but employed by clothing factories managed by Muslims. Asa was a teacher at a Muslim School and also lost her job. The Noors and their children struggled against such prejudices for many years.

After the Crusade, both Asa and Majiet served at various times on the Spiritual Assembly of Cape Town and in the teaching field, Majiet as a travelling teacher to many parts of southern Africa, as far as South West Africa and Swaziland. Their children also became active Baha'i teachers and administrators. Later in life Majiet changed his name to Michael to avoid an Islamic label. Asa went on pilgrimage to the Baha'i World Centre in 1968 and Majiet on pilgrimage to both the Holy Land and to Iran in 1970

(See entries for Davids, Gallow, Perdu.)

Identity politics and public disputation: A Baha'i missionary as a Muslim modernist in South Africa

Shamil Jeppie
(University of Cape Town)

Abstract

This paper focuses on the Arabic Study Circle and the role of its most influential member Joseph Perdu. It shows how the public life of the organization could not continue to bear the ambiguity of the identity of Perdu. Ultimately, there were attempts to 'expose' the 'real' Perdu and therefore the 'real' Arabic Study Circle. This essay raises the question of public performances of identity and their relations to private pursuits of identity.

The *Arabic Study Circle* was founded in the early 1950s in the port city of Durban on South Africa's East Coast. It was formed by a group of mainly Gujurati-speaking men in their early thirties who believed that learning the Arabic language was the key to independent reading and study of the Quran and other foundational sources of Islamic thought. The main figure behind the group was a local medical doctor, Dr. Daoud Mall, who was educated at Fort Hare University College in the Eastern Cape and at Sheffield University in England. He died in 2003 while nominally still the President of what remains of the original organization.

No history of the Circle would be complete without attempting to narrate in some detail the period when a charismatic foreign visitor to the country was employed by it. During this time his public engagements captured many hearts and minds for the Circle, but also for his own hidden cause. He gave the group a boost but also created many lasting problems for them. His "national identity", citizenship or country of birth was known neither to members of the Circle nor to

Journal for Islamic Studies, Vol.27, 2007, pp. 150-172

Comments

March 1. On this date in 1905, Shirin Fozdar was born to Zoroastrian parents who had converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Bombay. Along with her husband, they were the first Bahá'í pioneers to Singapore. She was an inaugural member of the National Spiritual Assembly of South East Asia.

March 1. On this date in 1905, Shirin Fozdar was born to Zoroastrian parents who had converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Bombay. Along with her husband, Khodadad Fozdar , they were the first Bahá'í pioneers to Singapore. She was an inaugural member of the National Spiritual Assembly of South East Asia .

Shirin Fozdar was born on March 1, 1905 to Persian Zoroastrian parents who had converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Bombay. The family went on a Bahá'í Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1906 when she was eleven months old, and Shirin took her first steps holding onto 'Abdu'l-Bahá's cloak. The family made a second Pilgrimage in 1911, and Shirin first met Shoghi Effendi. In 1922 she gave a talk on universal education at the Indian Bahá'í National Convention in Karachi.

In 1925 Shirin married Khodadad Fozdar , a medical doctor, and he became a Bahá'í soon after their marriage. The Fozdars had three sons, Jamshed , John, and Minoo, and two daughters. Jamshed was an early pioneer to Sarawak and became the most important Bahá'í writer on the Bahá'í fulfilment of Buddhist prophecies. John became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Brunei in 1954.

In 1931 she was elected to the Executive Committee of the All-Asian Women's Conference, a non-Bahá'í group, and in 1934 she was a representative of the Asian Women's Conference at the League of Nations. Shirin met Shoghi Effendi again when she went on Pilgrimage a third time with Khodadad in 1935, and Shoghi Effendi assured them that they were protected by God.

In January 1938 Shirin and Khodadad visited Colombo, Sri Lanka, with Martha Root for ten days. The Fozdars spoke at a local Parsi club. Shirin then accompanied Martha

to Mysore and Bangalore. Shirin also visited Burma in the 1930's, and Khodadad's position as Medical Officer of a Railway Company allowed her to travel across India to give talks on the faith and women's rights.

In 1941 Mahatma Gandhi asked Shirin to visit Ahmedabad on his behalf to speak on unity in response to Hindu Muslim tensions in the city. Her work towards women's rights in the 1940's was acknowledged by both Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

In 1950 Khodadad resigned from his job and the Fozdars pioneered to Singapore. They gave talks on the Faith, and Shirin was able to give talks to notable local women's organisations. In 1952 Shirin founded the Singapore Council of Women with 2000 members, and she was appointed as the group's Secretary-General. The group's efforts helped lead to the establishment of the Singapore Women's Charter in 1961. In late 1952 she visited Australia and New Zealand for several months to undertake a teaching tour.

In December 1953 Yankee Leong helped Shirin arrange talks on the Faith in Malacca, Seremban and Kuala Lumpur. He declared during this teaching tour making him the first Bahá'í of Malaya (now Malaysia). In 1953 Khodad became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Andaman Islands. In 1954 she visited Saigon, Vietnam, and became the first Bahá'í to visit French Indochina. She also visited Phnom Penh in Cambodia where she was presented with the country's first medal for being a Champion of Women's Rights.

In 1957 both Shirin and her husband were elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of South East Asia at the first South East Asia Convention held in Djakarta, Indonesia. Khodadad died the following year, a few days before the second South East Asia Convention. In 1958 she was part of a Singapore Delegation to the Afro-Asian Women's Conference in Colombo, and she was invited to China by the All China Federation of Women in 1959. She was invited to give talks relating to women's rights in the United States by the U.S. State Department after her visit to China.

In 1961 Shirin pioneered to teach the Bahá'í Faith in Bangkok, Thailand, and met with King Bhumibol Adulyadej. She established Santitham Vittayakom School in northeast Thailand. She moved back to Singapore in 1971, and in 1988 she received an award from the Singapore Council of Womens Organisations acknowledging her

contribution to the women's movement. She returned to India at some point, where she suffered a heart attack in Bombay, after which she returned to Singapore where she died on September 2, 1992 due to cancer.

Comments

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For example, Husayn Ali Rabbani was Shoghi Effendi's brother. In April 1945, Shoghi Effendi sent the following cable to the Bahá'í world : "My faithless brother Husayn, after long period of dishonourable conduct, has abandoned the Master's home to consort with his sister and other Covenant-breakers." In March 1950, Shoghi Effendi would send a further cable : "Faithless brother Hussein, already abased through dishonorable conduct over period (of) years followed by association with Covenant-breakers (in) Holy Land and efforts (to) undermine Guardian's position, recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with **lowborn Christian girl** (in) Europe."

Shoghi Effendi would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl" as follows: "Regarding his cable concerning Hussein: he has been very surprised to note

that the terms 'low-born Christian girl ' and 'disgraceful alliance' should arouse any question; it seems to him that the friends should realize it is not befitting for the Guardian's own brother, the grandchild of the Master, an Afnán and Aghsán mentioned in the Will and Testament of the Master, and of whom so much was expected because of his relation to the family of the Prophet, to marry an unknown girl, according to goodness knows what rite, who is not a believer at all."

Regarding Munib Shahid , his cousin through 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daughter Ruha, Shoghi Effendi sent the following cable to the Bahá'í world in November 1944: " Monib Shahid , grandson of both `Abdu'l-Bahá and the King of Martyrs , married according to the Moslem rites the daughter of a political exile who is nephew of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem . This treacherous act of alliance with enemies of the Faith merits condemnation of entire Bahá'í world."

In a letter titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers," Shoghi Effendi called one brother "my own treacherous, despicable brother Riaz."

Shoghi Effendi would similarly declare as Covenant-breakers all of his remaining siblings and first cousins .

Comments

March 1. On this date in 2012, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter "to the devoted believers of Bahá'u'lláh in the sacred land of Iran."

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[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

1 March 2012

To the devoted believers of Bahá'u'lláh in the sacred land of Iran

As we enter the month of the Fast, every hour of which is, according to the Pen of the Most High, endowed with a special virtue, the lovers of the Blessed Beauty throughout the world draw upon the celestial potency latent in these days in order to obtain a fresh measure of spiritual vitality. To observe the Fast with purity of motive attracts divine confirmations and leads to the awakening and cleansing of the heart. 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes, "Blessed are they who have observed the fast during its appointed month, who have gathered together in perfect unity and harmony, have freed themselves from the insinuations of doubt and stood firm in the Covenant." He describes "this physical fast" as "a symbol of the spiritual fast", meaning "the cleansing of the soul from all selfish desires, the acquisition of spiritual attributes, [and] attraction to the breezes of the All-Merciful." Turn therefore in these blessed days to the Threshold of the Ancient Beauty in supplication and prayer. May the community of the Greatest Name in the Cradle of the Faith win new confirmations and victories through your sacrifice and constructive resilience. During these days of fasting so laden with blessings, your spiritual brothers and sisters throughout the world are united with you in spirit and raise their hands in prayer, imploring God for relief and well-being both for you and for the other long-suffering citizens of your country, as well as for the progress and honour of that sacred land. We, too, supplicate at His Threshold and beseech His favours for you,

champions in the arena of faithfulness and ardent lovers of the Blessed Beauty, as well as for the noble people of Iran.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

March 2. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Hamburg difficulty is not insurmountable, as long as the friends all make up their minds that no sacrifice of personal feeling or opinion in this matter is too great to make in order to maintain the unity of the administrative order there.."

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2 March 1949

You, as devoted and experienced believers, must do all in your power to urge the friends to unite in order to protect the Faith. The Hamburg difficulty is not insurmountable, as long as the friends all make up their minds that no sacrifice of personal feeling or opinion in this matter is too great to make in order to maintain the unity of the administrative order there and the unity of the believers. The more friends take sides, the more difficult it will be to solve this problem.

He urges you both to encourage your son and brother to look upon the perfection of the Faith and not upon the imperfections of the believers--for we are all imperfect.

Comments

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> The Universal House of Justice
>
> 2 March 2013
>
> To the Bahá'ís of Iran
>
> Dearly loved Friends,
>
> For three and a half decades now, wave after wave of persecution, varying in intensity, has battered your sorely tried and valiant community, a barrage that is but the latest in a series unleashed over one hundred and sixty years ago. Yet, contrary to the expectations of those bent on sapping the strength of the community of Bahá'u'lláh's followers in His homeland, their machinations have served ultimately to reinforce its foundations and fortify its ranks. More and more of your compatriots, themselves victims of oppression, not only see clearly the trail of injustices that have been perpetrated against Bahá'ís down the years but also recognize in your unbroken record of disinterested service to society a force of constructive change. As sympathy towards you continues to grow, so do the voices calling for the removal of the obstacles that have prevented you from participating in the life of society in all of its dimensions. Not surprisingly, then, questions regarding the posture held by Bahá'ís everywhere towards political activity have taken on greater significance in the eyes of your fellow citizens.
>
> Historically, of course, the position in which the Iranian Bahá'í community

has found itself in this respect has been a peculiar one. It has been falsely accused, on the one hand, of being politically motivated, leagued against the prevailing regime—the agent of whatever foreign power the accuser finds most convenient to his purpose. On the other hand, the uncompromising refusal of the members of the community to participate in partisan political activity has been portrayed as a lack of concern for the affairs of the Iranian people. Now that the true intentions of your oppressors have been laid bare, it behoves you to respond to the growing interest of your fellow citizens in understanding the Bahá'í attitude towards politics, lest misconceptions be allowed to weaken the bonds of friendship you are establishing with so many souls. In this, they deserve more than a few statements, however important, that evoke images of love and unity. To assist you in conveying to them a vision of the framework that shapes the Bahá'í approach to the subject, we are providing you with the comments below.

Inseparable from the Bahá'í perspective on politics is a particular conception of history, its course and direction. Humanity, it is the firm conviction of every follower of Bahá'u'lláh, is approaching today the crowning stage in a millennia-long process which has brought it from its collective infancy to the threshold of maturity—a stage that will witness the unification of the human race. Not unlike the individual who passes through the unsettled yet promising period of adolescence, during which latent powers and capacities come to light, humankind as a whole is in the midst of an unprecedented transition. Behind so much of the turbulence and commotion of contemporary life are the fits and starts of a humanity struggling to come of age. Widely accepted practices and conventions, cherished attitudes and habits, are one by one being rendered obsolete, as the imperatives of maturity begin to assert themselves.

Bahá'ís are encouraged to see in the revolutionary changes taking place in every sphere of life the interaction of two fundamental processes. One is destructive in nature, while the other is integrative; both serve to carry humanity, each in its own way, along the path leading towards its full

maturity. The operation of the former is everywhere apparent—in the vicissitudes that have afflicted time-honoured institutions, in the impotence of leaders at all levels to mend the fractures appearing in the structure of society, in the dismantling of social norms that have long held in check unseemly passions, and in the despondency and indifference exhibited not only by individuals but also by entire societies that have lost any vital sense of purpose. Though devastating in their effects, the forces of disintegration tend to sweep away barriers that block humanity's progress, opening space for the process of integration to draw diverse groups together and disclosing new opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. Bahá'ís, of course, strive to align themselves, individually and collectively, with forces associated with the process of integration, which, they are confident, will continue to gain in strength, no matter how bleak the immediate horizons. Human affairs will be utterly reorganized, and an era of universal peace inaugurated.

Such is the view of history that underlies every endeavour pursued by the Bahá'í community.

As you know from your study of the Bahá'í writings, the principle that is to infuse all facets of organized life on the planet is the oneness of humankind, the hallmark of the age of maturity. That humanity constitutes a single people is a truth that, once viewed with scepticism, claims widespread acceptance today. The rejection of deeply ingrained prejudices and a growing sense of world citizenship are among the signs of this heightened awareness. Yet, however promising the rise in collective consciousness may be, it should be seen as only the first step of a process that will take decades —nay, centuries—to unfold. For the principle of the oneness of humankind, as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh, asks not merely for cooperation among people and nations. It calls for a complete reconceptualization of the relationships that sustain society. The deepening environmental crisis, driven by a system that condones the pillage of natural resources to satisfy an insatiable thirst for more, suggests how entirely inadequate is the present conception of humanity's relationship with nature; the

deterioration of the home environment, with the accompanying rise in the systematic exploitation of women and children worldwide, makes clear how pervasive are the misbegotten notions that define relations within the family unit; the persistence of despotism, on the one hand, and the increasing disregard for authority, on the other, reveal how unsatisfactory to a maturing humanity is the current relationship between the individual and the institutions of society; the concentration of material wealth in the hands of a minority of the world's population gives an indication of how fundamentally ill-conceived are relationships among the many sectors of what is now an emerging global community. The principle of the oneness of humankind implies, then, an organic change in the very structure of society.

What should be stated plainly here is that Bahá'ís do not believe the transformation thus envisioned will come about exclusively through their own efforts. Nor are they trying to create a movement that would seek to impose on society their vision of the future. Every nation and every group—indeed, every individual—will, to a greater or lesser degree, contribute to the emergence of the world civilization towards which humanity is irresistibly moving. Unity will progressively be achieved, as foreshadowed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in different realms of social existence, for instance, "unity in the political realm", "unity of thought in world undertakings", "unity of races" and the "unity of nations". As these come to be realized, the structures of a politically united world, which respects the full diversity of culture and provides channels for the expression of dignity and honour, will gradually take shape.

The question that occupies the worldwide Bahá'í community, then, is how it can best contribute to the civilization-building process as its resources increase. It sees two dimensions to its contribution. The first is related to its own growth and development, and the second to its involvement in society at large.

Regarding the first, Bahá'ís across the globe, in the most unassuming

settings, are striving to establish a pattern of activity and the corresponding administrative structures that embody the principle of the oneness of humankind and the convictions underpinning it, only a few of which are mentioned here as a means of illustration: that the rational soul has no gender, race, ethnicity or class, a fact that renders intolerable all forms of prejudice, not the least of which are those that prevent women from fulfilling their potential and engaging in various fields of endeavour shoulder to shoulder with men; that the root cause of prejudice is ignorance, which can be erased through educational processes that make knowledge accessible to the entire human race, ensuring it does not become the property of a privileged few; that science and religion are two complementary systems of knowledge and practice by which human beings come to understand the world around them and through which civilization advances; that religion without science soon degenerates into superstition and fanaticism, while science without religion becomes the tool of crude materialism; that true prosperity, the fruit of a dynamic coherence between the material and spiritual requirements of life, will recede further and further out of reach as long as consumerism continues to act as opium to the human soul; that justice, as a faculty of the soul, enables the individual to distinguish truth from falsehood and guides the investigation of reality, so essential if superstitious beliefs and outworn traditions that impede unity are to be eliminated; that, when appropriately brought to bear on social issues, justice is the single most important instrument for the establishment of unity; that work performed in the spirit of service to one's fellow human beings is a form of prayer, a means of worshipping God. Translating ideals such as these into reality, effecting a transformation at the level of the individual and laying the foundations of suitable social structures, is no small task, to be sure. Yet the Bahá'í community is dedicated to the long-term process of learning that this task entails, an enterprise in which increasing numbers from all walks of life, from every human group, are invited to take part.

Numerous, of course, are the questions that the process of learning, now

under way in all regions of the world, must address: how to bring people of different backgrounds together in an environment which, devoid of the constant threat of conflict and distinguished by its devotional character, encourages them to put aside the divisive ways of a partisan mindset, fosters higher degrees of unity of thought and action, and elicits wholehearted participation; how to administer the affairs of a community in which there is no ruling class with priestly functions that can lay claim to distinction or privilege; how to enable contingents of men and women to break free from the confines of passivity and the chains of oppression in order to engage in activities conducive to their spiritual, social and intellectual development; how to help youth navigate through a crucial stage of their lives and become empowered to direct their energies towards the advancement of civilization; how to create dynamics within the family unit that lead to material and spiritual prosperity without instilling in the rising generations feelings of estrangement towards an illusory "other" or nurturing any instinct to exploit those relegated to this category; how to make it possible for decision making to benefit from a diversity of perspectives through a consultative process which, understood as the collective investigation of reality, promotes detachment from personal views, gives due importance to valid empirical information, does not raise mere opinion to the status of fact or define truth as the compromise between opposing interest groups. To explore questions such as these and the many others certain to arise, the Bahá'í community has adopted a mode of operation characterized by action, reflection, consultation and study—study which involves not only constant reference to the writings of the Faith but also the scientific analysis of patterns unfolding. Indeed, how to maintain such a mode of learning in action, how to ensure that growing numbers participate in the generation and application of relevant knowledge, and how to devise structures for the systemization of an expanding worldwide experience and for the equitable distribution of the lessons learned—these are, themselves, the object of regular examination.

The overall direction of the process of learning that the Bahá'í community

is pursuing is guided by a series of global plans, the provisions of which are established by the Universal House of Justice. Capacity building is the watchword of these plans: they aim at enabling the protagonists of collective effort to strengthen the spiritual foundations of villages and neighbourhoods, to address certain of their social and economic needs, and to contribute to the discourses prevalent in society, all while maintaining the necessary coherence in methods and approaches.

At the heart of the learning process is inquiry into the nature of the relationships that bind the individual, the community, and the institutions of society—actors on the stage of history who have been locked in a struggle for power throughout time. In this context, the assumption that relations among them will inevitably conform to the dictates of competition, a notion that ignores the extraordinary potential of the human spirit, has been set aside in favour of the more likely premise that their harmonious interactions can foster a civilization befitting a mature humanity. Animating the Bahá'í effort to discover the nature of a new set of relationships among these three protagonists is a vision of a future society that derives inspiration from the analogy drawn by Bahá'u'lláh, in a Tablet penned nearly a century and a half ago, which compares the world to the human body. Cooperation is the principle that governs the functioning of that system. Just as the appearance of the rational soul in this realm of existence is made possible through the complex association of countless cells, whose organization in tissues and organs allows for the realization of distinctive capacities, so can civilization be seen as the outcome of a set of interactions among closely integrated, diverse components which have transcended the narrow purpose of tending to their own existence. And just as the viability of every cell and every organ is contingent upon the health of the body as a whole, so should the prosperity of every individual, every family, every people be sought in the well-being of the entire human race. In keeping with such a vision, institutions, appreciating the need for coordinated action channelled toward fruitful ends, aim not to control but to nurture and guide the individual, who, in turn, willingly receives

guidance, not in blind obedience, but with faith founded on conscious knowledge. The community, meanwhile, takes on the challenge of sustaining an environment where the powers of individuals, who wish to exercise self-expression responsibly in accordance with the common weal and the plans of institutions, multiply in unified action.

If the web of relationships alluded to above is to take shape and give rise to a pattern of life distinguished by adherence to the principle of the oneness of humankind, certain foundational concepts must be carefully examined. Most notable among them is the conception of power. Clearly the concept of power as a means of domination, with the accompanying notions of contest, contention, division and superiority, must be left behind. This is not to deny the operation of power; after all, even in cases where institutions of society have received their mandates through the consent of the people, power is involved in the exercise of authority. But political processes, like other processes of life, should not remain unaffected by the powers of the human spirit that the Bahá'í Faith—for that matter, every great religious tradition that has appeared throughout the ages—hopes to tap: the power of unity, of love, of humble service, of pure deeds. Associated with power in this sense are words such as "release", "encourage", "channel", "guide" and "enable". Power is not a finite entity which is to be "seized" and "jealously guarded"; it constitutes a limitless capacity to transform that resides in the human race as a body.

The Bahá'í community readily acknowledges that it has a considerable distance to traverse before its growing experience yields the necessary insights into the workings of the desired set of interactions. It makes no claims to perfection. To uphold high ideals and to have become their embodiment are not one and the same. Myriad are the challenges that lie ahead, and much remains to be learned. The casual observer may well choose to label the community's attempts to surmount these challenges "idealistic". Yet it certainly would not be justified to portray Bahá'ís as uninterested in the affairs of their own countries, much less as unpatriotic. However idealistic the Bahá'í endeavour may appear to some, its deep-

seated concern for the good of humankind cannot be ignored. And given that no current arrangement in the world seems capable of lifting humanity from the quagmire of conflict and contention and securing its felicity, why would any government object to the efforts of one group of people to deepen its understanding of the nature of those essential relationships inherent to the common future towards which the human race is being inexorably drawn? What harm is there in this?

Within the framework traced out by the above ideas, then, it is possible to consider the second dimension of the Bahá'í community's efforts to contribute to the advancement of civilization: its involvement in society at large. Clearly what Bahá'ís see as one aspect of their contribution cannot contradict the other. They cannot be seeking to establish patterns of thought and action that give expression to the principle of oneness within their community, yet engage in activities in another context which, to whatever extent, reinforce an entirely different set of assumptions about social existence. To avoid such a duality, the Bahá'í community has progressively refined over time, on the basis of the teachings of the Faith, the main features of its participation in the life of society. First and foremost, Bahá'ís endeavour, whether as individuals or as a community, to put into practice the command of Bahá'u'lláh: "They that are endued with sincerity and faithfulness should associate with all the peoples and kindreds of the earth with joy and radiance, inasmuch as consorting with people hath promoted and will continue to promote unity and concord, which in turn are conducive to the maintenance of order in the world and to the regeneration of nations." It is through "association and meeting", 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained further, that "we find happiness and development, individual and collective." "That which is conducive to association and attraction and unity among the sons of men", He has written in this connection, "is the means of the life of the world of humanity, and whatever causeth division, repulsion and remoteness leadeth to the death of humankind." Even in the case of religion, He has made it clear that it "must be the cause of love and fellowship. Should

religion become the cause of contention and enmity, its absence is preferable." So it is that Bahá'ís do their utmost at all times to heed the counsel of Bahá'u'lláh, "Shut your eyes to estrangement, then fix your gaze upon unity." "That one indeed is a man", He exhorts His followers, "who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race." "Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in," is His admonition, "and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements." "The supreme need of humanity is cooperation and reciprocity," 'Abdu'l-Bahá has indicated. "The stronger the ties of fellowship and solidarity amongst men, the greater will be the power of constructiveness and accomplishment in all the planes of human activity." "So powerful is the light of unity", Bahá'u'lláh declares, "that it can illuminate the whole earth."

It is with such thoughts in mind that Bahá'ís enter into collaboration, as their resources permit, with an increasing number of movements, organizations, groups and individuals, establishing partnerships that strive to transform society and further the cause of unity, promote human welfare, and contribute to world solidarity. Indeed, the standard set by passages such as the above inspires the Bahá'í community to become actively engaged in as many aspects of contemporary life as feasible. In choosing areas of collaboration, Bahá'ís are to bear in mind the principle, enshrined in their teachings, that means should be consistent with ends; noble goals cannot be achieved through unworthy means. Specifically, it is not possible to build enduring unity through endeavours that require contention or assume that an inherent conflict of interests underlies all human interactions, however subtly. It should be noted here that, despite the limitations imposed by adherence to this principle, the community has not experienced a shortage of opportunities for collaboration; so many people in the world today are working intensely towards one or another aim which Bahá'ís share. In this respect, they also take care not to overstep certain bounds with their colleagues and associates. They are not to regard any joint undertaking as an occasion to impose religious convictions. Self-

righteousness and other unfortunate manifestations of religious zeal are to be utterly avoided. Bahá'ís do, however, readily offer to their collaborators the lessons they have learned through their own experience, just as they are happy to incorporate into their community-building efforts insights gained through such association.

This brings us, at last, to the specific question of political activity. The conviction of the Bahá'í community that humanity, having passed through earlier stages of social evolution, stands at the threshold of its collective maturity; its belief that the principle of the oneness of humankind, the hallmark of the age of maturity, implies a change in the very structure of society; its dedication to a learning process that, animated by this principle, explores the workings of a new set of relationships among the individual, the community and the institutions of society, the three protagonists in the advancement of civilization; its confidence that a revised conception of power, freed from the notion of dominance with the accompanying ideas of contest, contention, division and superiority, underlies the desired set of relationships; its commitment to a vision of a world that, benefitting from humanity's rich cultural diversity, abides no lines of separation—these all constitute essential elements of the framework that shapes the Bahá'í approach to politics set out in brief below.

Bahá'ís do not seek political power. They will not accept political posts in their respective governments, whatever the particular system in place, though they will take up positions which they deem to be purely administrative in nature. They will not affiliate themselves with political parties, become entangled in partisan issues, or participate in programmes tied to the divisive agendas of any group or faction. At the same time, Bahá'ís respect those who, out of a sincere desire to serve their countries, choose to pursue political aspirations or to engage in political activity. The approach adopted by the Bahá'í community of non-involvement in such activity is not intended as a statement expressing some fundamental objection to politics in its true sense; indeed, humanity organizes itself through its political affairs. Bahá'ís vote in civil elections, as long as they do

not have to identify themselves with any party in order to do so. In this connection, they view government as a system for maintaining the welfare and orderly progress of a society, and they undertake, one and all, to observe the laws of the land in which they reside, without allowing their inner religious beliefs to be violated. Bahá'ís will not be party to any instigation to overthrow a government. Nor will they interfere in political relations between the governments of different nations. This does not mean that they are naive about political processes in the world today and make no distinction between just and tyrannical rule. The rulers of the earth have sacred obligations to fulfil towards their people, who should be seen as the most precious treasure of any nation. Wherever they reside, Bahá'ís endeavour to uphold the standard of justice, addressing inequities directed towards themselves or towards others, but only through lawful means available to them, eschewing all forms of violent protest. Moreover, in no way does the love they hold in their hearts for humanity run counter to the sense of duty they feel to expend their energies in service to their respective countries.

The approach, or strategy if you will, with the simple set of parameters outlined in the foregoing paragraph enables the community, in a world where nations and tribes are pitted one against the other and people are divided and separated by social structures, to maintain its cohesion and integrity as a global entity and to ensure that the activities of the Bahá'ís in one country do not jeopardize the existence of those elsewhere. Guarded against competing interests of nations and political parties, the Bahá'í community is thus able to build its capacity to contribute to processes that promote peace and unity.

Dear Friends: We recognize that treading this path, which you have done so ably for decades, is not without its challenges. It asks for an integrity that cannot be shaken, for a rectitude of conduct that cannot be undermined, for a clarity of thought that cannot be obscured, for a love of one's country that cannot be manipulated. Now that your fellow citizens understand your plight, and possibilities will no doubt open for you to participate even

further in the life of society, we pray that you will be assisted from on High in explaining to your friends and compatriots the framework articulated in these pages so that, in collaboration with them, you will find increasing opportunities to labour for the good of your people without compromising, in any way, your identity as followers of One Who summoned humanity, more than a century ago, to a new World Order.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

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> The beloved Guardian sends his loving greetings to each and every one of the friends in Japan. He greatly values their devotion and sacrifice for the Faith, and the noble manner in which they are arising to spread the Teachings in that land.
>
> He feels the future of Japan is very great. The hearts and minds of the Japanese people are awakened; and if the teaching work is carried on very actively and audaciously, many souls will be attracted by the Divine Fragrances.
>
> The beloved Guardian is so confident that the Faith will spread rapidly in Japan, and the believers will firmly establish the institutions of the Cause, that he has chosen to send to them for ultimate display in their National Haziratu'l-Quds in Tokyo one of the very precious relics from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. He has entrusted with our dear brother, Hiroyasu Takano, a very precious brocade, which has rested immediately over the remains of Bahá'u'lláh in His glorious Shrine. It is very precious and very sacred.

The Guardian is sending this to the Spiritual Assembly of Tokyo as a gift. The friends may wish to have it carefully and beautifully framed for display in the Hazira, when it is acquired. Ultimately of course it is to be hung in the Hazira of the National Assembly, when that great goal has been achieved by the Japanese believers.

The beloved Guardian assures each and every one of you of his prayers in your behalf.

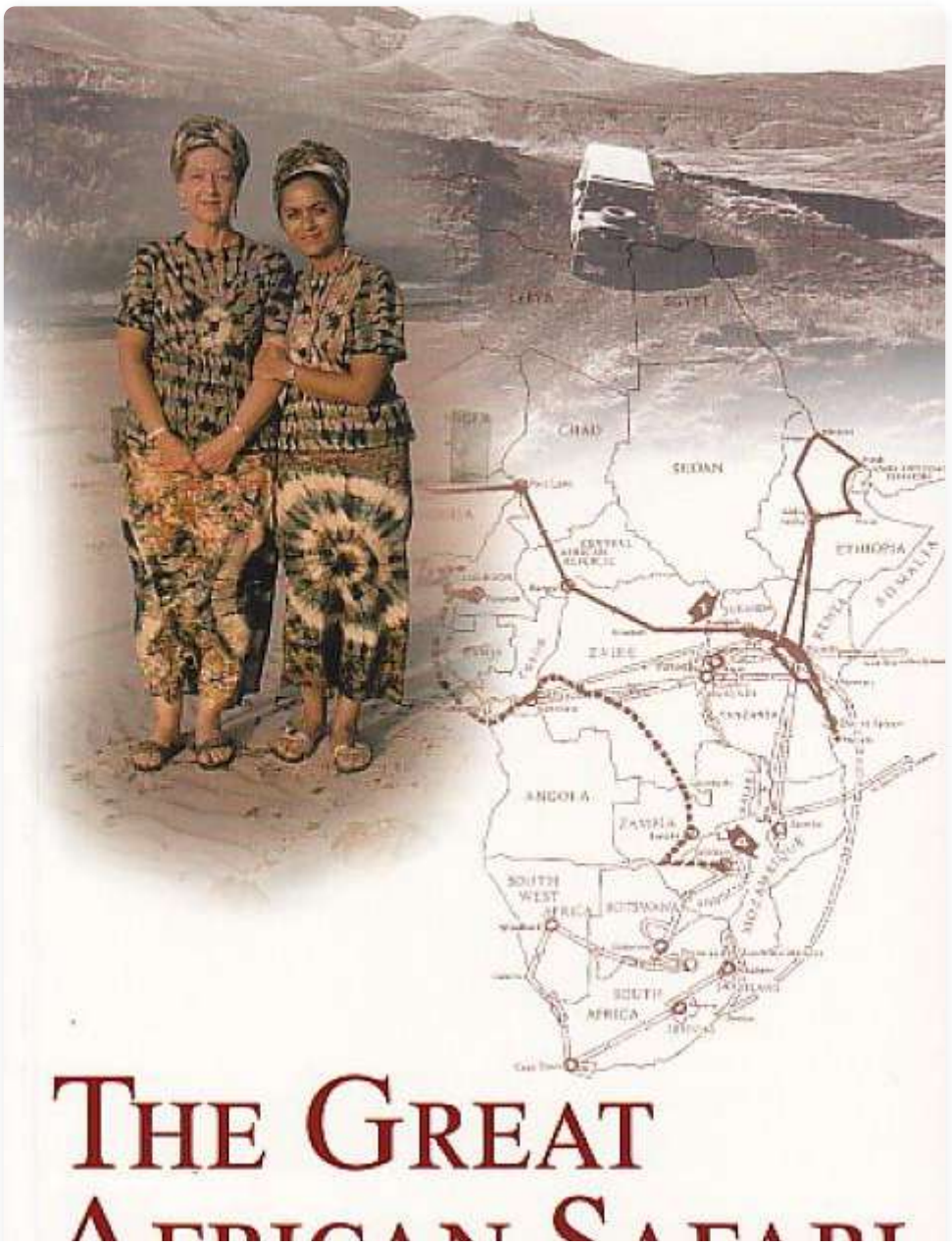
(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(March 2, 1954)

Comments

March 2. On this date in 1970, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum arrived in Accra, Ghana during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's "The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum."

March 2. On this date in 1970, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum arrived in Accra, Ghana during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's *The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum*. From Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957 until her own death in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum traveled to over 185 countries and territories.



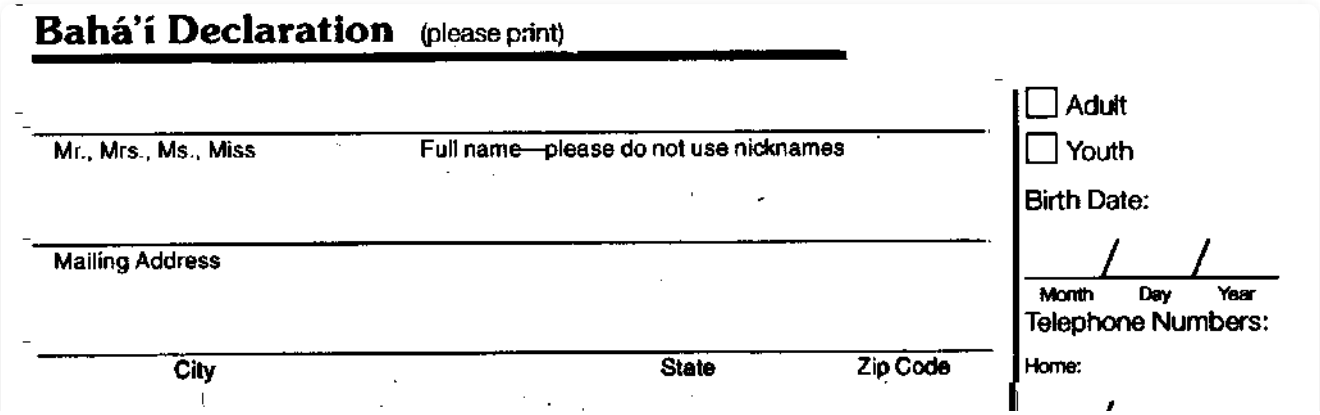
AFRICAN SAFARI
THE TRAVELS OF AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚḤÍYYIH KHÁNUM IN AFRICA, 1969-73
VIOLETTE NAKHJAVANI

Comments

March 2. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...If a person makes it quite clear that they do not wish to be considered an active member of the Bahá'í Community and be affiliated with it and exert their voting right, then their name should be removed from the voting list; but if a ...."

March 2. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...If a person makes it quite clear that they do not wish to be considered an active member of the Bahá'í Community and be affiliated with it and exert their voting right, then their name should be removed from the voting list; but if a person considers himself or herself a Bahá'í, and for various reasons is not able to be active in the affairs of the Community, then they should certainly not be removed from our voting list...."

> 300. If Person Does Not Wish to be Considered Member
>
> "...If a person makes it quite clear that they do not wish to be considered an active member of the Bahá'í Community and be affiliated with it and exert their voting right, then their name should be removed from the voting list; but if a person considers himself or herself a Bahá'í, and for various reasons is not able to be active in the affairs of the Community, then they should certainly not be removed from our voting list...."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, March 2, 1951: The Nineteen Day Feast, p. 8)



Country/State of Birth

Work:

Have you ever enrolled in the faith before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

In signing this card, I declare my belief in Baha'u'lláh, the Promised One of God. I also recognize the Báb, His Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of His Covenant. I request enrollment in the Bahá'í Community with the understanding that Baha'u'lláh has established sacred principles, laws, and institutions which I must obey.

Signature _____ Date _____

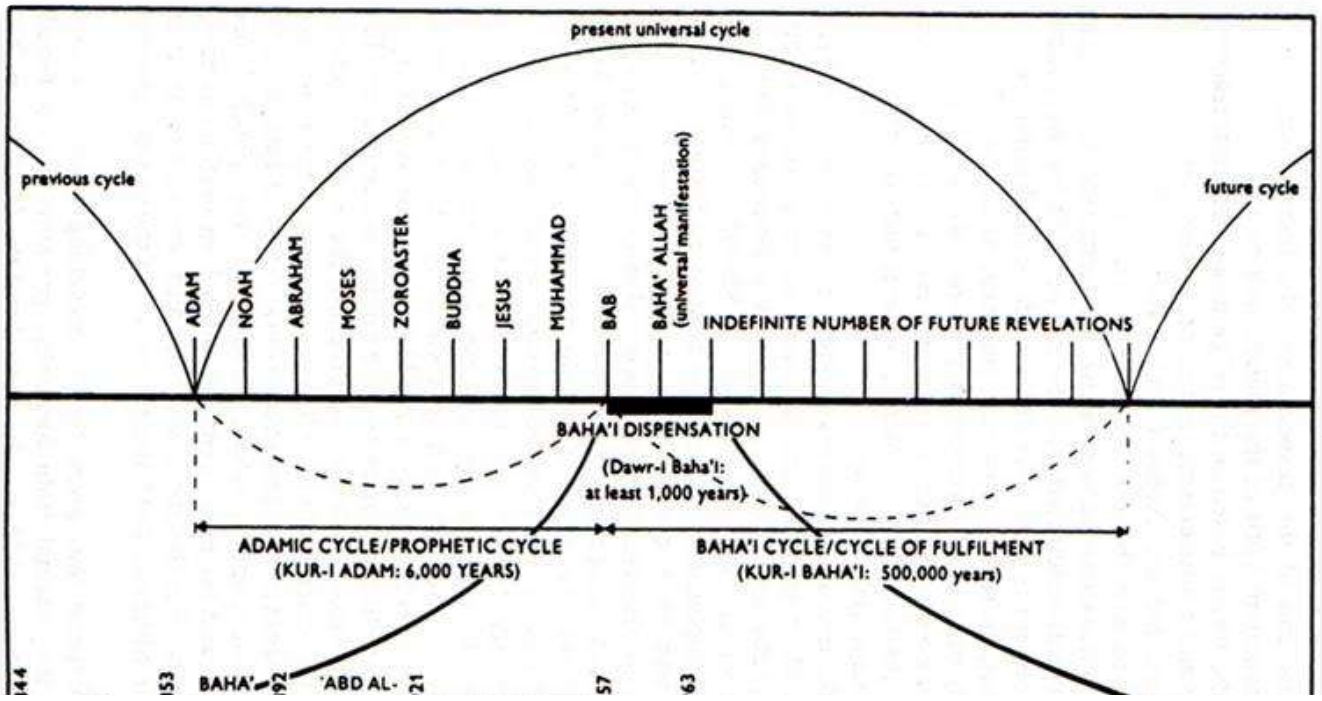
Comments

March 2. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi "said the Golden Age may be in 70 to 100 years." The Golden Age will itself be a process of maturation, following from the establishment of the Most Great Peace.

March 2. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi " said the Golden Age may be in 70 to 100 years." The Golden Age will itself be a process of maturation, following from the establishment of the Most Great Peace .

> When asked when will be the beginning of the Golden Age - Guardian said the Golden Age may be in 70 to 100 years. Leroy Ioas commented that the establishment of the Universal House of Justice does not mean the beginning of the Golden age.

The Golden Age of Bahá'u'lláh is the name given to the flowering of the world civilisation which will be the fruit of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation. Although this is mentioned in the Writings of the Guardian of the Faith, it is not clearly delineated, and is largely left to the individual imagination to picture its nature and to try to conceive of its results. It is clear that the Golden Age will itself be a process of maturation, following from the establishment of the Most Great Peace .



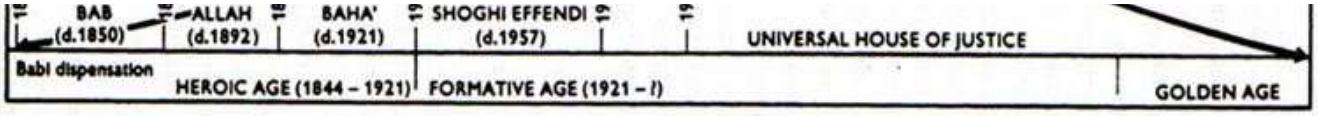


Figure 16.1 *The Baha'i view of history*

Comments

March 2. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Announce to friends of East and West the following ... historic house of Bahá'u'lláh in Acre, scene of prolonged afflictions sustained by Founder of Faith, as well as supreme crisis suffered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at hands of Covenantbreakers."

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> Spiritual and Administrative World Center
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>
> Greatly welcome assistance of the newly-formed International Council, particularly its President, Mason Remey, and its Vice-President, Amelia Collins, through contact with authorities designed to spread the fame, consolidate the foundations and widen the scope of influence emanating from the twin spiritual, administrative World Centers permanently fixed in

the Holy Land constituting the midmost heart of the entire planet.

[--Shogh]

[Cablegram, March 2, 1951]

On December 16, 1950, a little over a year after the international recognition of the State of Israel, the mansion at Mazra'a was leased from the Israeli government by the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'u'lláh lived there from 1877 until 1879, before moving to the Mansion at Bahjí .

The transaction is described in Baha'i News, no. 244, June 1951, p. 4

> **Masra'ih is a Moslem religious endowment, and it is consequently impossible, under existing laws in this country, for it to be sold. However, as the friends are aware, the Ministry of Religions, due to the direct intervention of the Minister himself, Rabbi Maimon, consented, in the face of considerable opposition, to deliver Masra'ih to the Baha'is as a Holy Place to be visited by Baha'i pilgrims. This means that we rent it from the Department of Moslem and Druze affairs in the Ministry of Religions. The head of this Department is also a Rabbi, Dr. Hirschberg. Recently he, his wife and party, visited all the Baha'i properties in Haifa and 'Akka, following upon a very pleasant tea party in the Western Pilgrim House with the members of the International Baha'i Council.**

The mansion at Mazra'a would later be purchased by the Bahá'í Administrative Order from the Israeli government as reported in Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968-1973, published 1976; Ridván Message 1973, p. 119

> The Mansion of Mazra'ih, often referred to by the beloved Guardian as one of the "twin mansions" in which the Blessed Beauty resided after nine years within the walled prison-city of 'Akká, and dear to the hearts of the believers by reason of its associations with their Lord, has at last been purchased together with 24,000 square meters of land extending into the

plain on its eastward side.

On November 12, 1952, a cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi announced the "acquisition of vitally-needed property" of the Mansion of Bahji and the area around it from " the Development Authority of the State of Israel ...The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners ."

Acquisition of Vitally-Needed Property

Announce to Bahá'í communities, East and West, on the joyous occasion of the hundred and thirty-fifth Anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's Birthday, the successful termination of the protracted negotiations, initiated two years ago and culminating in the signature to the contract providing **the eventual, formal transfer by the Development Authority of the State of Israel** to the Palestine Branch of the American National Spiritual Assembly of the **extensive, long-desired, vitally-needed property surrounding and safeguarding for posterity the Most Holy Tomb of the Founder of the Faith, as well as the adjoining Mansion.**

The acquired area, raising Bahá'í holdings on the holy plain of Akka from four thousand to one hundred and fifty-five thousand square meters, was exchanged against property donated by children of Zikrullah, grandchildren of Mírzá Muhammad Quli, Bahá'u'lláh's faithful half-brother and companion in exile.

This spontaneous offer contrasts with the shameful action of the family in the sale to non-Baha'is of the property in the neighborhood of the Jordan valley purchased through the instrumentality of `Abdu'l-Bahá during Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime, pursuant to His instructions and alluded to in His writings.

The forty acre property acquired in this single transaction almost equals the entire Bahá'í international endowments purchased in the course of sixty years in the vicinity of the Báb's Sepulcher on the slope of Mount Carmel.

The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was

made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners , traditional supporters of the old Covenant-breakers and descendants of the notorious enemy of `Abdu'l-Bahá who placed his residence at the disposal of the Committee of Investigation.

The signature to the agreement signalized the commencement of large-scale landscaping, aiming at the beautification of the immediate precincts of the holiest spot in the entire Bahá'í world, itself the prelude to the eventual erection, as happened in the case of the Báb's Sepulcher, of a befitting Mausoleum enshrining the precious Dust of the Most Great Name.

Desire to acknowledge the indefatigable efforts exerted by both Larry Hautz and Leroy Ioas enabling the consummation of the initial stage of the enterprise destined to eclipse in its final phase the splendor and magnificence of the Báb's resting-place on Mount Carmel.

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, November 12, 1952]

Comments

March 2. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram announcing the formation of the International Bahá'í Council with Mason Remey as its President. After Shoghi Effendi's death, Mason Remey would use this appointment as President as a basis for his claim of being the second Guardian.

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> Spiritual and Administrative World Center
>
> Announce to friends of East and West the following: furnishing Mazra'ih , completion of restoration of historic house of Bahá'u'lláh in Acre , scene of prolonged afflictions sustained by Founder of Faith, as well as supreme crisis suffered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at hands of Covenantbreakers. Greatly enhanced international endowments in Holy Land in twin cities of Acre and Haifa, now include twin Holy Shrines situated on plain of Acre and slope of Mount Carmel; twin Mansions of Bahjí and Mazra'ih, twin historic Houses inhabited by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá; twin International Archives adjoining the Báb's Sepulcher and the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf; twin Pilgrim Houses, constructed for Oriental and Occidental pilgrims; twin Gardens of Riḍván and Firdaws, associated with the memory of the Author of the Bahá'í Dispensation.
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> Greatly welcome assistance of the newly-formed International Council , particularly its President, Mason Remey , and its Vice-President, Amelia Collins , through contact with authorities designed to spread the fame, consolidate the foundations and widen the scope of influence emanating from the twin spiritual, administrative World Centers permanently fixed in

the Holy Land constituting the midmost heart of the entire planet.

—Shoghi

[Cablegram, March 2, 1951]

Comments

March 2. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Moslems are exerting a very great effort in America - allying themselves with the Christians - they are not sincere ...Even to the extent of forming ties with the Christians - even with the Catholics, their bitter enemies.."

March 2. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Moslems are exerting a very great effort in America - allying themselves with the Christians - they are not sincere - but compromise their principles. The building of the Mosque in Washington D.C. is a direct result from our building the Temple. Diplomats and Ambassadors from the East, from Egypt - went back and told their people - if the few Bahá'ís can build such a beautiful Temple - why can't we of the Moslem world do better. They will do everything they can to attract people - but they compromise their principles. Even to the extent of forming ties with the Christians - even with the Catholics, their bitter enemies.."

Comments

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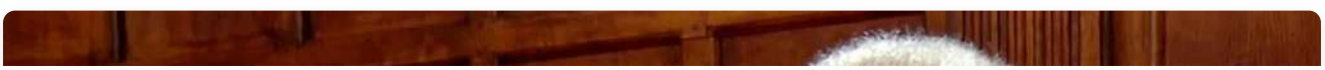
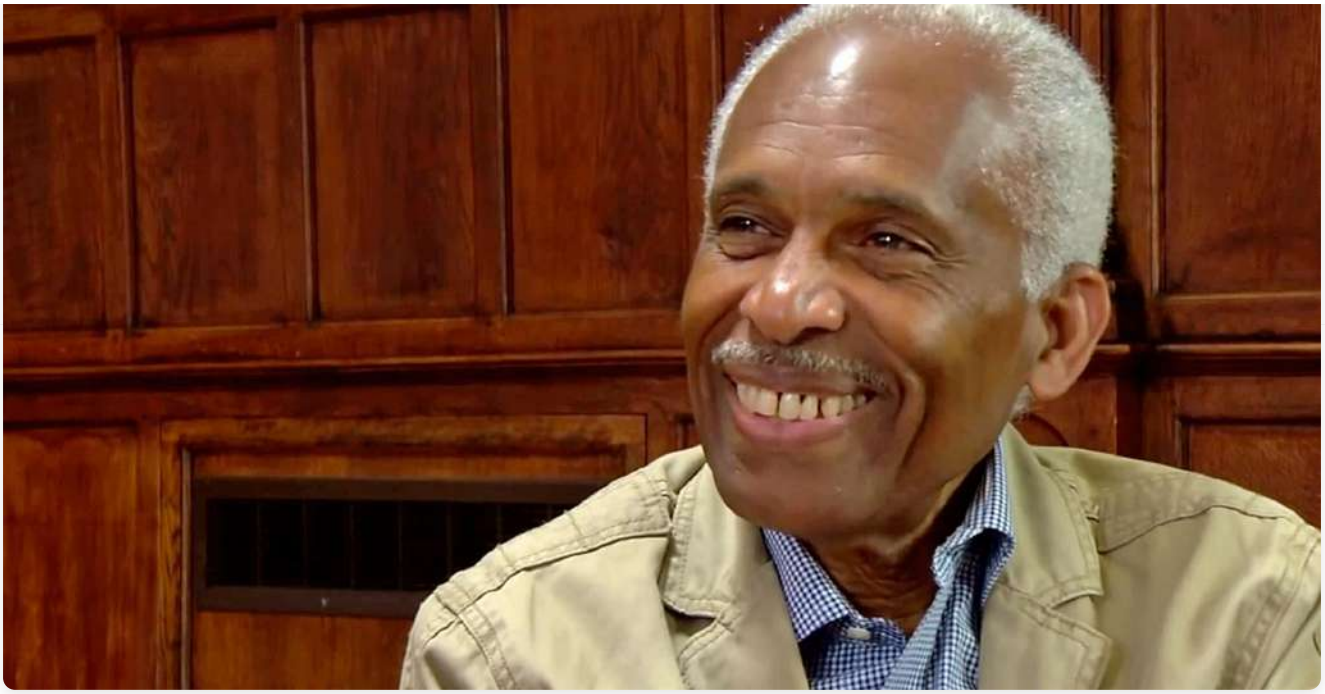
Glenford Mitchell was born in Jamaica on March 3, 1935. From 1962 to 1963 he was assistant editorial director of Maryknoll Publications and executive secretary of the Maryknoll Book Club in New York. He later served as assistant editor of "Africa Report" magazine (1963-67) and as managing editor of "World Order Magazine" (1967-82). He was an instructor in English and journalism at Howard University (1966-67).

In 1967, while serving on the National Teaching Committee for the United States, the National Spiritual Assembly asked Glenford Mitchell to establish the National Youth Office. In 1968 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. That same year he became its secretary, a post he held until his election to the Universal House of Justice in 1982.

He is married to Bahia (Deloomy) Mitchell, who serves as a Human Resource Manager for the U.S. Department of State and serves as a Permanent Member of the Tahirih Justice Center and a member of the Board of Directors of SolHealth , both of which are described as "Bahá'í-inspired public charity organizations." The Mitchell's have one daughter, Tarissa Mitchell, who currently practices as a pediatrician in Jonesboro, Georgia. She previously served as chair of the Harvard-Radcliffe Baha'i Association, where she received her undergraduate degree in 1999, before going on to study medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine.

Glenford Mitchell died on February 7, 2026 in Decatur, Georgia.





Comments

March 3. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi cabled about May Maxwell's death two days previous of a heart attack, noting "To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added." Six years later, about Lidia Zamenhoff who died in a Nazi death ....

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On March 1, 1940, May Maxwell died of a heart attack in Buenos Aires, Argentina. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell , who designed the Shrine of the Báb, and was the mother of Mary Maxwell , the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum .

May Maxwell was born in Englewood, New Jersey on January 14, 1870. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell , who designed the Shrine of the Báb, and was the mother of Mary Maxwell , the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum .

The Sutherland's were active Bahá'ís throughout their lives. For example, on September 2, 1912 , during his tour of North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Maxwell's Montreal home where he presented his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America .

May Maxwell died on March 1, 1940, of a heart attack in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she was teaching the Faith. Shoghi Effendi, her son-in-law, gave her the status of martyr. Keith Ransom-Kehler , who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr. But Lidia Zamenhoff , who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly

stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> 'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.

Shortly after May Maxwell 's death in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 1, 1940, plans were made for the construction of a memorial at her gravesite. Designed by her husband, William Sutherland Maxwell , and approved by Shoghi Effendi, the memorial was dedicated on May 10, 1943 by the Bahá'ís of Buenos Aires at Quilmes Cemetery on behalf of the Bahá'ís of North and South America.

On May 12 1943, Shoghi Effendi cabled Argentine Bahá'ís he was "delighted (at the) completion (and) dedication (of the) Maxwell Memorial.

> 111-Completion and Dedication of Maxwell Memorial
>
> 12 MAY 1943
>
> DELIGHTED COMPLETION DEDICATION MAXWELL MEMORIAL

SYMBOLIC ACT NOBLY CONSUMMATED CONVEY BUENOS AIRES ASSEMBLY CONGRATULATIONS GRATITUDE ASSURANCE LOVING PRAYERS SPIRITUAL PARTICIPATION HISTORIC CEREMONY. APPRECIATE PHOTOGRAPHS DEDICATION GATHERING.

'ABDU'L-BAHA'S
BELOVED HANDMAID, DISTINGUISHED
DISCIPLE
MAY ELLIS MAXWELL
NEE MAY ELLIS BOLLES
BORN ENGLEWOOD N.J. JAN 16 1870
DIED BUENOS AIRES MARCH 1 1940
WIFE OF W. SUTHERLAND MAXWELL
"Laden with the fruits
garnered through well-
nigh half a century of
toilsome service to the
Cause she so greatly loved,
she set her face towards
the southern outpost of
the Faith in the New
World and laid down her
life in such a spirit of
consecration and self-
sacrifice as has truly
merited the crown of
martyrdom" Shoghi Effendi

Comments

March 3. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "He appreciates very much the pioneer services you have rendered. He hopes that from now on you and your dear husband will be able to serve the Faith unitedly and devotedly together, as that is the highest form of Bahá'í cooperation in marriage."

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> 1948. Pioneering is the Highest Form of Bahá'í Cooperation in Marriage
>
> "He appreciates very much the pioneer services you have rendered. He hopes that from now on you and your dear husband will be able to serve the Faith unitedly and devotedly together, as that is the highest form of Bahá'í cooperation in marriage."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 3, 1955)

Comments

March 3. On this date in 1955, Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote "Canadian believers have been deprived of their voting rights...this is the heaviest sanction we possess at present in the Faith, short of excommunication...."

March 3. On this date in 1955, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "Canadian believers have been deprived of their voting rights; and he feels that all National Spiritual Assemblies should bear in mind that this is the heaviest sanction we possess at present in the Faith, short of excommunication, which lies within the powers of the Guardian alone; and is consequently a very weighty weapon to wield."

> Haifa, Israel,
>
> March 3, 1955.
>
> DEPRIVATION OF VOTING RIGHTS
>
> National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.
>
> Our beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you on his behalf and bring to your attention a certain matter.
>
> He has heard from a number of sources that some of the Canadian believers have been deprived of their voting rights; and he feels that all National Spiritual Assemblies should bear in mind that this is the heaviest sanction we possess at present in the Faith, short of excommunication, which lies within the powers of the Guardian alone; and is consequently a very weighty weapon to wield.
>
> He considers that under no circumstances should any Bahá'í ever be suspended from the voting list and deprived of his administrative privileges for a matter which is not of the utmost gravity. By that he means breaking of laws, such as the consent of parents to marriage etc., or acts of such an immoral character as to damage the good name of the Faith.

He has informed, some years ago, the American National Spiritual Assembly that, before anyone is deprived of their voting rights, they should be consulted with and lovingly admonished at first, given repeated warnings if they do not mend their immoral ways, or whatever other extremely serious misdemeanor they are committing, and finally, after these repeated warnings, be deprived of their voting rights.

He feels that a great many problems within the communities would be solved if the believers would more constructively devote their attention to the teaching work and carrying out the provisions of the Ten Year Plan as they affect Canada. The leadership of your Assembly in these matters will no doubt be of great help and inspiration to the friends; and he on his part will reinforce you with his prayers.

With warm Bahá'í love,

R. RABBANI

Comments

March 3. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the primary purpose for which Local Spiritual Assemblies are established is to promote the teaching work..."

March 3. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice wrote "And since the primary purpose for which Local Spiritual Assemblies are established is to promote the teaching work, it is clear that every National Spiritual Assembly must give careful consideration to ways and means to encourage each Local Assembly under its jurisdiction to fulfil its principal obligation"

14. Primary Purpose to Promote Teaching Work

"And since the primary purpose for which Local Spiritual Assemblies are established is to promote the teaching work, it is clear that every National Spiritual Assembly must give careful consideration to ways and means to encourage each Local Assembly under its jurisdiction to fulfil its principal obligation ... it is important that Local Assemblies share with the local friends stories of successes achieved by some of them, descriptions of effective presentations found useful by them, examples of various ways that a Bahá'í subject could be introduced to inquirers, or illustrations of methods which would enable the believer to relate the needs of society to our teachings. Such information and suggestions could be offered to the friends at Nineteen Day Feasts, through a local newsletter, or by any means open to each Local Assembly. In all these contacts with the believers, each Local Spiritual Assembly should impress upon the friends the unique and irreplaceable role the individual plays in the prosecution of any Bahá'í undertaking...."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, March 3, 1977)

Comments

March 3. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning plum pudding; in fact, in any way."

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> 1173. Drinking Forbidden, No Excuse to Touch It Even in Plum Pudding
>
> "Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning plum pudding; in fact, in any way."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 3, 1957: Cited in a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 21, 1972)

Comments

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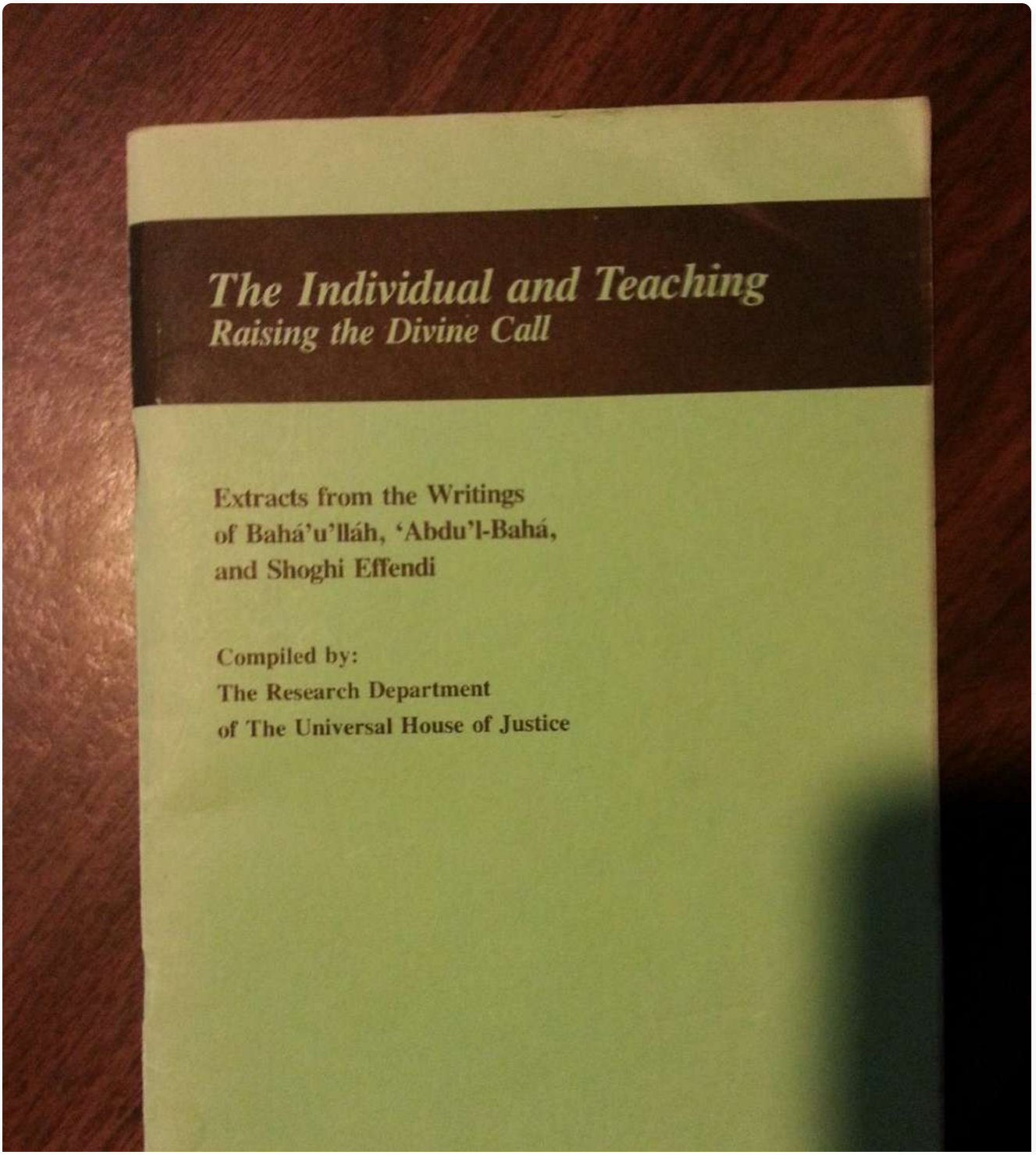


Comments

March 3. On this date in 1908, the first Feast in Oakland, California was held at the home of Helen Goodall. She had earlier made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu’l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908."

March 3. On this date in 1908, the first Feast in Oakland, California was held at the home of Helen Goodall. She had earlier made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu’l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled *Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908*.

The book contains many observations of 'Abdu’l-Bahá's household, daily routine and other visitors. The ladies also chronicle some of the lessons they received, such as this recounting of the *Exile of Bahá'u'lláh* by Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali...

> When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.
>
> Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.
>
> The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was

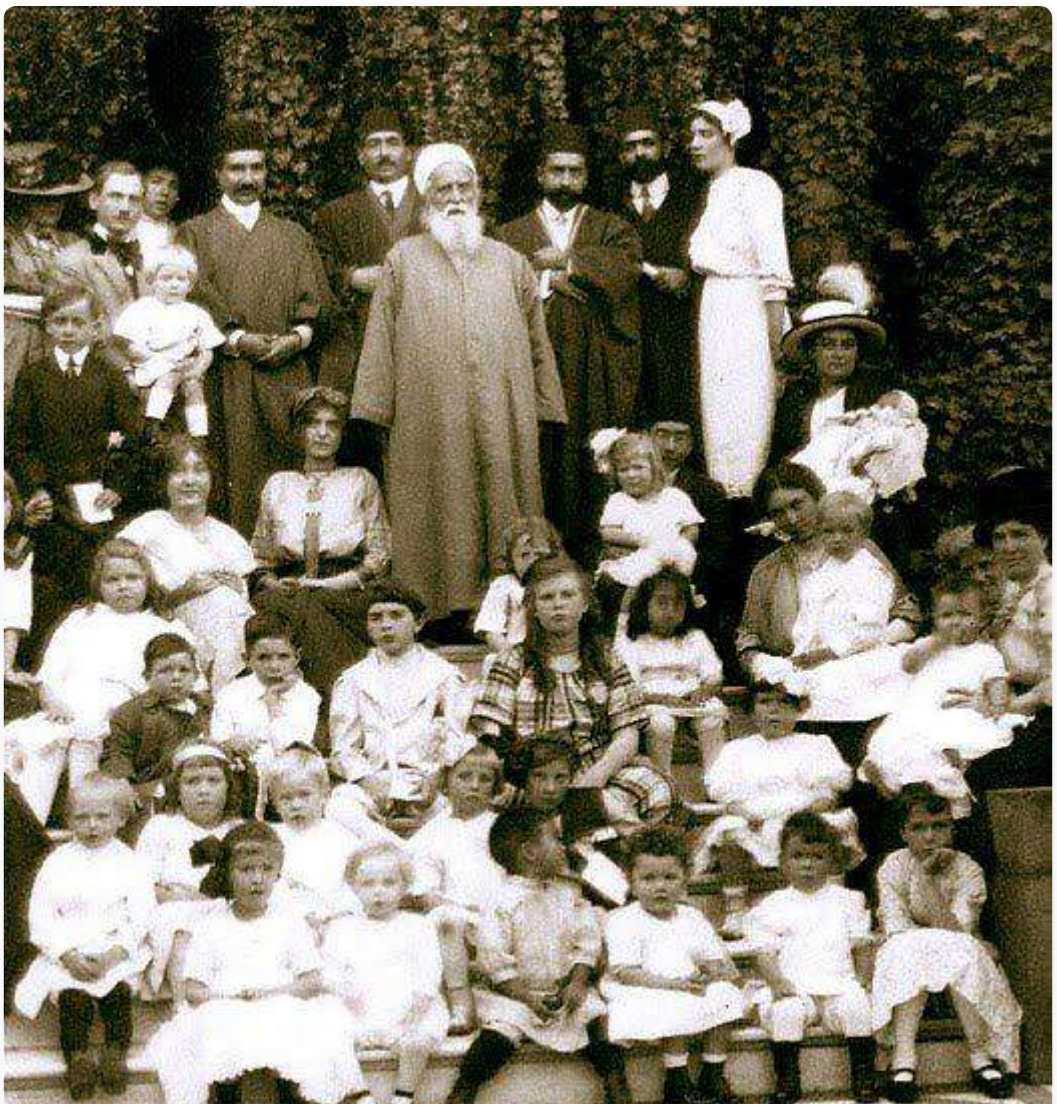
accordingly done, and an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.

The book also describes in the chapter titled *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH* their impressions on viewing the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh

THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH

The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy Bab and Bahá'u'lláh was accorded us just before we left Akka.

This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty is the only one in existence. How perfectly that noble Face and Form embody the Words, "The King has come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler of the Throne and of the dust!" and at the same time express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and Love.



Comments

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On September 11, 1928, the Bahá'ís of Baghdád..."through the High Commissioner for Iraq...approached the League's Permanent Mandates Commission, charged with the supervision of the administration of all Mandated Territories, and presented a petition" about Bahá'u'lláh's Baghdad house." As written by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By* ...

> **Of a more serious nature, and productive of still greater repercussions, was the unlawful seizure by the Shí'ahs of Iraq, at about the same time that the keys of the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh were wrested by the Covenant-breakers from its keeper, of yet another Bahá'í Shrine, the House occupied by Bahá'u'lláh for well nigh the whole period of His exile in Iraq, which had been acquired by Him, and later had been ordained as a center of pilgrimage , and had continued in the unbroken and undisputed possession of His followers ever since His departure from Baghdád.** This crisis, originating about a year prior to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, and precipitated by the measures which, after the change of regime in Iraq, had, according to His instructions, been taken for the reconstruction of that House, acquired as it developed a steadily widening measure of publicity. **It became the object of the consideration of successive tribunals, first of the local Shí'ah Ja'faríyyih court in Baghdád, second of the Peace court, then the court of First Instance, then of the court of Appeal in Iraq, and finally of the League of Nations, the greatest international body yet come into existence, and empowered to exercise supervision and control over all Mandated Territories.** Though as yet unresolved through a

combination of causes, religious as well as political, it has already **remarkably fulfilled Bahá'u'lláh's own prediction, and will, in its own appointed time, as the means for its solution are providentially created, fulfill the high destiny ordained for it by Him in His Tablets.** Long before its seizure by fanatical enemies, who had no conceivable claim to it whatever, He had prophesied that "it shall be so abased in the days to come as to cause tears to flow from every discerning eye."

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Baghdád, deprived of the use of that sacred property through an adverse decision by a majority of the court of Appeal, which had reversed the verdict of the lower court and awarded the property to the Shí'ahs, and aroused by subsequent action of the Shí'ahs, soon after the execution of the judgment of that court, in converting the building into waqf property (pious foundation), designating it "Husayníyyih," with the purpose of consolidating their gain, realized the futility of the three years of negotiations they had been conducting with the civil authorities in Baghdád for the righting of the wrong inflicted upon them. In their capacity as the national representatives of the Bahá'ís of Iraq, they, therefore, **on September 11, 1928, through the High Commissioner for Iraq and in conformity with the provisions of Art. 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, approached the League's Permanent Mandates Commission, charged with the supervision of the administration of all Mandated Territories, and presented a petition that was accepted and approved by that body in November, 1928.** A memorandum submitted, in connection with that petition, to that same Commission, by the Mandatory Power unequivocally stated that **the Shí'ahs had "no conceivable claim whatever" to the House, that the decision of the judge of the Ja'faríyyih court was "obviously wrong," "unjust" and "undoubtedly actuated by religious prejudice," that the subsequent ejectment of the Bahá'ís was "illegal," that the action of the authorities had been "highly irregular," and that the**

verdict of the Court of Appeal was suspected of not being "uninfluenced by political consideration."

"The Commission," states the Report submitted by it to the Council of the League, and published in the Minutes of the 14th session of the Permanent Mandates Commission, held in Geneva in the fall of 1928, and subsequently translated into Arabic and published in Iraq, "draws the Council's attention to the considerations and conclusions suggested to it by an examination of the petition... It recommends that the Council should ask the British Government to make representations to the Iraq Government with a view to the immediate redress of the denial of justice from which the petitioners have suffered."

The British accredited representative present at the sessions of the Commission, furthermore, stated that "the Mandatory Power had recognized that the Bahá'ís had suffered an injustice," whilst allusion was made, in the course of that session, to the fact that the action of the Shí'ahs constituted a breach of the constitution and the Organic Law of Iraq. The Finnish representative, moreover, in his report to the Council, declared that this "injustice must be attributed solely to religious passion," and asked that "the petitioner's wrongs should be redressed."

The Council of the League, on its part, having considered this report as well as the joint observations and conclusions of the Commission, unanimously adopted, on March 4, 1929, a resolution, subsequently translated and published in the newspapers of Baghdád, directing the Mandatory Power "to make representations to the Government of Iraq with a view to the immediate redress of the injustice suffered by the Petitioners." It instructed, accordingly, the Secretary General to bring to the notice of the Mandatory Power, as well as to the petitioners concerned, the conclusions arrived at by the Commission, an instruction which was duly transmitted by the British Government through its High Commissioner to the Iraq Government.

A letter dated January 12, 1931, written on behalf of the British Foreign Minister, Mr. Arthur Henderson, addressed to the League Secretariat, stated that the conclusions reached by the Council had "received the most careful consideration by the Government of Iraq," who had "finally decided to set up a special committee ... to consider the views expressed by the Bahá'í community in respect of certain houses in Baghdád, and to formulate recommendations for an equitable settlement of this question." That letter, moreover, pointed out that the committee had submitted its report in August, 1930, that it had been accepted by the government, that the Bahá'í community had "accepted in principle" its recommendations, and that the authorities in Baghdád had directed that "detailed plans and estimates shall be prepared with a view to carrying these recommendations into effect during the coming financial year."

No need to dwell on the subsequent history of this momentous case, on the long-drawn out negotiations, the delays and complications that ensued; on the consultations, "over a hundred" in number, in which the king, his ministers and advisers took part; on the expressions of "regret," of "surprise" and of "anxiety" placed on record at successive sessions of the Mandates Commission held in Geneva in 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932 and 1933; on the condemnation by its members of the "spirit of intolerance" animating the Shí'ah community, of the "partiality" of the Iráqí courts, of the "weakness" of the civil authorities and of the "religious passion at the bottom of this injustice"; on their testimony to the "extremely conciliatory disposition" of the petitioners, on their "doubt" regarding the adequacy of the proposals, and on their recognition of the "serious" character of the situation that had been created, of the "flagrant denial of justice" which the Bahá'ís had suffered, and of the "moral debt" which the Iraq Government had contracted, a debt which, whatever the changes in her status as a nation, it was her bounden duty to discharge.

Nor does it seem necessary to expatiate on the unfortunate consequences of the untimely death of both the British High Commissioner and the Iráqí Prime Minister; on the admission of Iraq as a member of the League, and

the consequent termination of the mandate held by Great Britain; on the tragic and unexpected death of the King himself; on the difficulties raised owing to the existence of a town planning scheme; on the written assurance conveyed to the High Commissioner by the acting Premier in his letter of January, 1932; on the pledge given by the King, prior to his death, in the presence of the foreign minister, in February, 1933, that the House would be expropriated, and the necessary sum would be appropriated in the spring of the ensuing year; on the categorical statement made by that same foreign minister that the Prime Minister had given the necessary assurances that the promise already made by the acting Premier would be redeemed; or on the positive statements made by that same Foreign Minister and his colleague, the Minister of Finance, when representing their country during the sessions of the League Assembly held in Geneva, that the promise given by their late King would be fully honored.

Suffice it to say that, despite these interminable delays, protests and evasions, and the manifest failure of the Authorities concerned to implement the recommendations made by both the Council of the League and the Permanent Mandates Commission, the publicity achieved for the Faith by this memorable litigation, and the defense of its cause--the cause of truth and justice--by the world's highest tribunal, have been such as to excite the wonder of its friends and to fill with consternation its enemies. Few episodes, if any, since the birth of the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, have given rise to repercussions in high places comparable to the effect produced on governments and chancelleries by this violent and unprovoked assault directed by its inveterate enemies against one of its holiest sanctuaries.

"Grieve not, O House of God," Bahá'u'lláh Himself has significantly written, "if the veil of thy sanctity be rent asunder by the infidels. God hath, in the world of creation, adorned thee with the jewel of His remembrance. Such an ornament no man can, at any time, profane. Towards thee the eyes of thy Lord shall, under all conditions, remain directed." "In the fullness of time," He, in another passage, referring to that same House, has

> prophesied, "the Lord shall, by the power of truth, exalt it in the eyes of all men. He shall cause it to become the Standard of His Kingdom, the Shrine round which will circle the concourse of the faithful."
>
> To the bold onslaught made by the breakers of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh in their concerted efforts to secure the custodianship of His holy Tomb, to the arbitrary seizure of His holy House in Baghdád by the Shí'ah community of Iraq, was to be added, a few years later, yet another grievous assault launched by a still more powerful adversary, directed against the very fabric of the Administrative Order as established by two long-flourishing Bahá'í communities of the East, culminating in the virtual disruption of these communities and the seizure of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world and of the few accessory institutions already reared about it.

On July 17, 2013, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter "to the Bahá'ís of the World" announcing "with utter shock and desolating grief that the Bahá'ís in Baghdad discovered on 26 June that the "most holy habitation" of Bahá'u'lláh had been razed almost to the ground to make way for the construction of a mosque," at the end of what the Universal Hose of Justice calls a "highly delicate situation in Iraq over the last tumultuous decade."

It is somewhat ironic, that in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq. David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

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returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon , a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

Comments

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Roy Fernie was the only son of Evelyn Granthame-Hayes and Cyril Fernie, the owner of the C. Fernie Steamship Company in the Panama Canal Zone. He was born on January 20, 1922 at Ancon in the Canal Zone, but spent most of his school years in England with his grandparents.

Since Roy was the only son, his father definitely expected him to make major in businesses administration and take over the reins of the Steamship Company. Accordingly, he sent him to business college in England. But Roy, from childhood on, manifested a tremendous variety of talents, none of them in the least related to the business world. he had an excellent ear for harmony and learned to play both the accordion and piano by ear. He painted, wrote science fiction stories, directed stage plays, and was a superb actor. His abilities were so diverse they seemed to include almost everything but business. But his greatest ambition, he often said, was always to be a doctor.

When World War I broke out Roy was only too glad to escape what he considered to be the dull routine of business school and he joined the Royal Air Force. Because of illness he was discharged from the Air Force, but then emigrated to the United States an again entered the Armed Services. When the war ended he became an American citizen and lived for several years in St. Louis, Missouri.

By that time Roy's father had retired from active participation in the Steamship Agency, but he constantly kept hope that Roy would take over the business, and eventually, to please his father, Roy returned to the Canal Zone. It was there that he first heard of the Bahá'í Faith. He was recuperating from a severe tropical fever at his sister's home in Panama City when he heard her mention a Bahá'í girl she had just met. It was late in the evening, and to his sister's consternation he insisted he must meet the "Bahá'í girl" immediately. He was so dogged in his determination that she

called the girl and practically begged her to let Roy come over.

That same night Roy found himself in the headquarters of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central America and the Antilles . The "Bahá'í girl" was Elena Maria Marsella , secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly. Roy's family background was Anglican, but he himself had long since ceased to adhere to any "organized religion". With his naturally inquisitive mind he had investigated many faiths but had never found one that seemed sensible or, in his words, "logical".

From that point onward Roy's life took a very different turn. He made his declaration in March of 1953; two months later he and Elena were married, and in another three months the newlyweds had answered the call of the Ten Year Crusade .

For Roy's father this was the last straw. He disinherited his son. This was a great shock to Roy who attached little importance to wealth, because he genuinely wished his father to understand what he called a "new job that was worth more then a million dollars".

After many interesting adventures the Fernies found themselves on Abaiang in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands .

From the first the Gilbertese were fascinated with this tall, lanky American with the brilliant blue eyes, the bubbling personality, the unfailing sense of humor. He kept them constantly intrigued. He put on magic shows for them, played the piano, sand with them, learned their language and started English classes for them. Although he could not openly teach the Faith he actually taught all the principles by example. And before long he had a myriad opportunities to teach that way, for the missionaries began to suspect that the Fernies were not just visiting the Gilbert Islands to study the Flora and fauna. Soon they were hinting that the Fernies were a "dangerous" couple who were under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Scotland Yard. The Colonial Government, without giving Roy and opportunity to defend himself, accepted the accusations as true.

Day by day the persecution grew more intense, but it served only to draw the people themselves closer and closer to the Fernies. When finally a Catholic priest saw the word "Bahá'í" on a letter addressed to the "dangerous Americans" he proclaimed the

Faith for them. He obtained information about it from Australia, then wrote articles in *The Star of the Gilberts* magazine which went to every island in the atoll. Meanwhile, one Gilbertese had actually declared his acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. Peter became Roy's constant companion. He could read English and he eagerly devoured every book in the Fernie library. Shoghi Effendi, in a letter to him, told him not to teach his people yet, but to follow the example of the Fernies.

With the proclamation of the Faith by the Catholic priest, Roy and Peter the first Gilbertese Bahá'í, were constantly harassed, both by the missionaries and the heads of the Colonial Government.

But time was short for Roy. First Peter was deported to his own island in the Southern Gilberts , accused of crimes. Then Roy was accused of being a divisive influence, and he was deported to Canton Island .

He went to Hawaii to be as near as possible to the Gilberts, hoping that as a result of the Colonial Government's investigation in London and the efforts of the British National Spiritual Assembly, he would be allowed to return. He died on October 21, 1964, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island , both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands , also part of the Realm of New Zealand , are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands . Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its

own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

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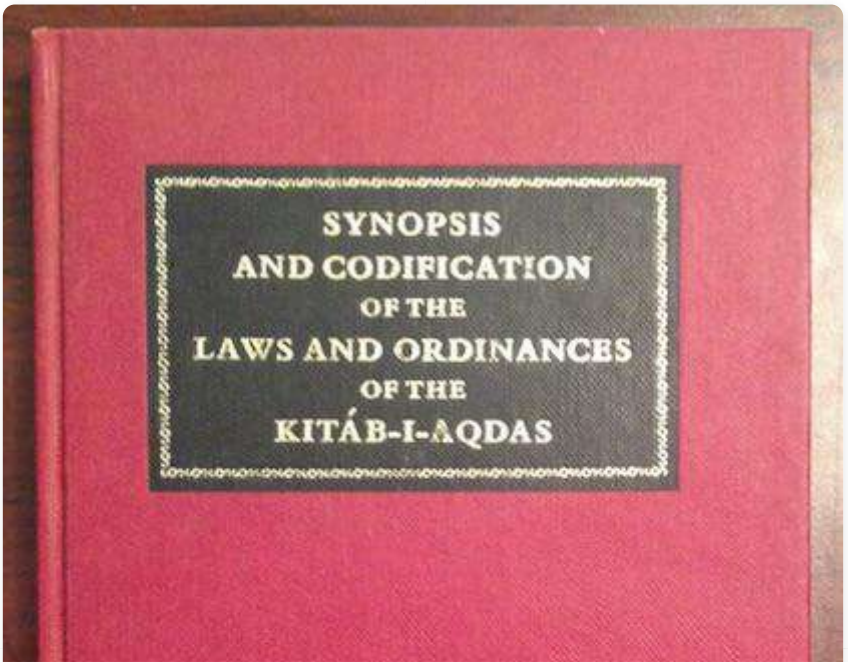
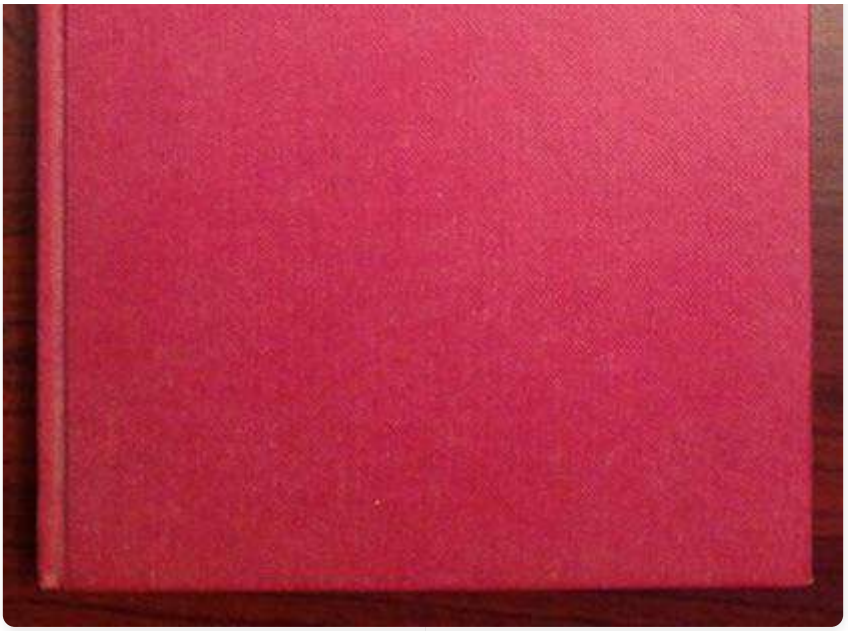
In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the central book of the Bahá'í Faith written by Bahá'u'lláh, was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations, such as one by the Royal Asiatic Society, were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet. My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.





Comments

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> **4 March 1926** [Margaret Stevenson]
>
> Dear Bahá'í Sister,
>
> Your letter to Shoghi Effendi and the enclosed one to Ruhi with the postal order for Â£10 have been received and read with keen interest and pleasure.
>
> We are all very happy to know that you have had such a pleasant journey back home and that you had the opportunity of delivering the message on so many occasions. We hope and pray that the seed you have sown has fallen on fertile soil and that in time it will grow and bear abundant fruit.
>
> We hope that now through your sustained zeal and effort new life will be infused into your small Bahá'í group, and that it will in the near future grow sufficiently in number to enable you to form an Assembly the first to be established in that land. We shall all pray at the Holy Threshold for your guidance and the success of your work.
>
> The Greatest Holy Leaf and the Holy Mother remember you well, and they and the other members of the family send their loving greetings to you.
>
> You will be interested to know that the new pilgrim house is being completed, and it will be all ready in a month's time for the new pilgrims that will come.
>
> We still have our dear sister Effie Baker with us, and we all love her so, she is so sweet and helpful.
>
> We have just now two American lady friends with us, Auntie Victoria Bedekian **18** and Mrs R. Kehler **19** - very fine Bahá'ís they are and we are

expecting some more soon.

I always remember the happy day I spent with you and Effie in London and shall look forward to the pleasure of meeting you again some day - perhaps here in Haifa or in New Zealand, who knows?

I am back at home now for the present, and am trying to help Shoghi Effendi a little in his enormous task.

He is keeping in good health I am glad to say in spite of his many activities and heavy and manifold responsibilities.

To you he sends his brotherly love and the assurance of his prayers for your welfare and happiness.

With all good wishes and loving greetings,

Your sister in His service, Ruh-Anguiz Rabbani

My dear and precious Bahá'í sister,

I cannot but add a few words personally expressing my deep appreciation of your persistent self-sacrificing services to the Cause. I have donated your gift towards the Fund for the Western Pilgrim House and I wish to assure you that when I visit the Holy Shrines I tenderly supplicate for you Divine Guidance and strength in your labours for our beloved Cause.

Your true brother, Shoghi

18 Victoria Bedikian (d.1955), from Montclair, New Jersey, promoted the education of Bahá'í children. In the 1920s she produced The World Fellowship Magazine and The Magazine of the Children of the Kingdom, and was in close correspondence with the Australian and New Zealand Bahá'ís.

19 Mrs Keith Ransom-Kehler was a New York Bahá'í who travelled widely and was a most effective public speaker. She visited New Zealand and Australia 1931-32. She died in Iran in 1933 while on assignment for Shoghi Effendi.

Comments

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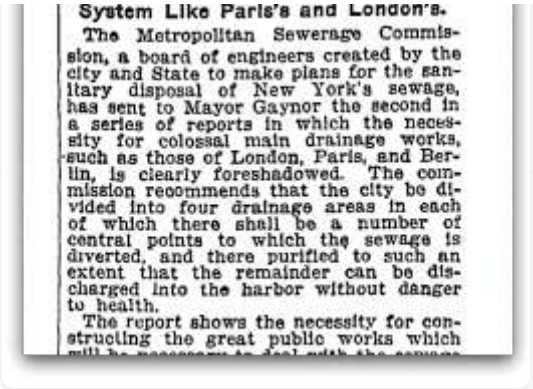
> Head of Religious Unity Movement to Arrive Early in April.
>
> The leader of the Bahá'í movement, which aims at a world religious unity, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas, as he is called by his followers, and Abbas Effendi by official title, will arrive in America the first week in April. Preparations for his welcome have been undertaken by the Persian-American Educational Society of Washington. Abbas Effendi is the third of the leaders of Bahá'ísm. He was the prisoner of the Turks and the Persians until the Young Turks movement a few years ago. The former Sultan, 'Abdul Hamid, sentenced him to prison for life. The believers among the Moslems regarded his liberal tendencies with greatest distrust and punished him repeatedly.
>
> The Bahá'í belief is that universal peace is possible only through harmony of all religions, and they teach that all religions are basically one. Hence they seek a return to first principles. Differences, they say, have arisen through the corruptions of theology and dogmas. All religions they believe are divinely inspired.
>
> Abbas Effendi was born in 1844, and on the very day that Ali Mohammed made his declaration as first leader of the cult. It is estimated that about one-third of the Persians are now Bahá'ís. In America the number of friends of the movement has grown steadly since the teachings first became known at the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893.

Metropolitan Board Outlines Colossal



System Like Paris's and London's.

The Metropolitan Sewerage Commission, a board of engineers created by the city and State to make plans for the sanitary disposal of New York's sewage, has sent to Mayor Gaynor the second in a series of reports in which the necessity for colossal main drainage works, such as those of London, Paris, and Berlin, is clearly foreshadowed. The commission recommends that the city be divided into four drainage areas in each of which there shall be a number of central points to which the sewage is diverted, and there purified to such an extent that the remainder can be discharged into the harbor without danger to health.

The report shows the necessity for constructing the great public works which

Comments

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> 27 March 2003
>
> Transmitted electronically
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> Your email message of 4 March 2003 has been received at the Bahá'í World Centre, and we can reply as follows. You state that there are large-scale demonstrations arising in your community and in communities around the world, and **you inquire about the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace** . It is important to keep in mind that while these activities are generally carried out in the name of peace, **such occasions are motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil and confusion in the world** . Not only would it be contrary to the Bahá'í principle of non-involvement in politics for individual believers, or Bahá'í institutions, to become associated with such activities, it could also be harmful to the interests of the Faith internationally. The point to bear in mind here is that **current demonstrations are not intended to promote peace in**

principle but are focused on a specific dispute among governments. As you can no doubt understand, Bahá'í participation in public demonstrations involving controversial issues would undermine the Faith's essential purpose of promoting unity in all aspects of human affairs, and your desire to remain focused on the essential work of the Faith is deeply appreciated.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

cc: National Assembly of the United States (by email)

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Chronicle / Brant Ward

Comments

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Hají Ákhúnd was born in the village of Shahmírzád, Iran, in 1842. He was the son of a Mullá, and after some preliminary studies, he went to Mashhad to attend a religious college. In 1861, he encountered Bábís and converted to the Báb's religion.

He settled in Tehran, where he later became a Bahá'í. He was arrested many times in Tehran: in 1886 on the orders of Mulla 'Ali Kani, in 1872 for seven months by Nayibu's-Saltanih, in 1882 for two years by Nayibu's-Saltanih, in 1887, and in 1891 for two years with Hájí Amín. He visited 'Akká to visit Bahá'u'lláh and his family on three occasions: in 1873, 1888, and 1899.

He was given the task of transferring the remains of the Báb from various secret locations to 'Akká, where they remained for several years until they were eventually entombed in the Shrine of the Báb. He was one of the four Hands of the Cause appointed by Bahá'u'lláh himself, and was responsible for much of the Bahá'í activity in Iran until his death on March 4, 1910, in Tehran.

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> 1695. There Were No Followers of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh from the Far East During Their Ministry
>
> "As there were no followers of the Bab or Bahá'u'lláh derived from the religions of the Far East in Their days, this may be the reason that they did not address any Tablets directly to these people. Also we must remember that every religion springs from some root, and just as Christianity sprang from Judaism, our own religion sprang from Islam, and that is why so many of the teachings deduct their proofs from Islam."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 5, 1957)
>
> "The teachings bear no reference to any genealogical tie between the Prophets of the Near and Far East."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 31, 1941)

Comments

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In 1907 John Henry Hyde, then married to Fannie Dunn, met Clara in Walla Walla, Washington, when he and Nathan Ward Fitzgerald sought to place an advertisement for a Bahá'í meeting they were holding in the medical office she was working at. She attended the meeting and later became a Bahá'í. John and Clara met again when attending a talk given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá when he visited California in 1912, and the two would get married.

On April 10, 1919, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn disembarked from their ship in Sydney, opening Australia to the Bahá'í Faith .

Perhaps the most famous Australian Bahá'í is Cathy Freeman , an Aborigine who in the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics had the honor of lighting the stadium's Olympic flame in the cauldron within a circle of fire. She also carried the Australian Flag and Aboriginal flag after winning the 400 meter race at the Sydney Olympic Games.

Cathy Freeman had her Bahá'í administrative rights suspended for political activism on behalf of Aboriginal Australians.

It is worth remembering 'Abdu'l-Bahá's views on native, indigenous people and cultures.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell (later named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

> Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.
>
> If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme**

degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The

mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and**

useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy

Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, “We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything.” But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature’s laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

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> Dear fellow-workers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh:—
>
> It is with words of regret and disappointment that I desire to open this letter because of my inability, in view of my manifold and pressing duties, to respond individually and in writing to the many messages of love and sympathy and of hope that you have so affectionately sent me since our Beloved's passing from this World . I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of the bereaved ladies of the Household when I say that however desirous we may be to correspond separately with every one of you, the grave responsibilities and manifold duties now devolved upon us make it regrettably impossible to express in written messages to every friend what we constantly feel in our hearts, and pray for when visiting His sacred Shrine.
>
> At this grave and momentous period through which the Cause of God in conformity with the Divine Wisdom is passing, it is the sacred duty of every one of us to endeavor to realize the full significance of this Hour of Transition, and then to make a supreme resolve to arise steadfastly for the fulfilment of our sacred obligations.

Great as is the love and paternal care which our beloved Master is extending to us from on High, and unique as is the Spirit that animates today His servants in the world, yet a great deal will depend upon the character and efforts of His loved ones on whom now rests the responsibility of carrying on His work gloriously after Him. How great is the need at this moment when the promised outpourings of His grace are ready to be extended to every soul, for us all to form a broad vision of the mission of the Cause to mankind, and to do all in our power to spread it throughout the world! The eyes of the world, now that the sublime Personality of the Master has been removed from this visible plane, are turned with eager anticipation to us who are named after His name, and on whom rests primarily the responsibility to keep burning the torch that He has lit in this world. How keenly I feel at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause the need for **a firm and definite determination to subordinate all our personal likings, our local interests, to the interests and requirements of the Cause of God!** Now is the time to set aside, nay, to forget altogether, minor considerations regarding our internal relationships, and to present a solid united front to the world animated by no other desire but to serve and propagate His Cause.

It is my firm conviction which I now express with all sincerity and candor, that the dignity and unity of the Cause urgently demands—particularly throughout the American continent—that the ** friends should in their words and conduct emphasize and give absolute prominence to the constructive dynamic principles of Bahá'u'lláh, rather than attach undue importance to His negative Teachings.** With hearts cleansed from the least trace of suspicion and filled with hope and faith in what the spirit of love can achieve, we must one and all endeavor at this moment to forget past impressions, and with absolute good-will and genuine cooperation unite in deepening and diffusing the spirit of love and service that the Cause has thus far so remarkably shown to the world. To this attitude of good-will, of forbearance and genuine kindness to all, must be added, however, constant but unprovocative vigilance, lest unrestricted association

with the peoples of the world should enable the very few who have been definitely pronounced by the Master as injurious to the body of the Cause, to make a breach in the Movement. Not until, however, an unmistakable evidence should appear, manifestly revealing the evil motives of a certain individual or group of individuals , is it advisable to make the matter public; for an untimely declaration that shall give rise to open differences among the friends is far more detrimental than forbearing still further with those who are suspected of evil intentions. As the Master so fully and consistently did throughout His lifetime, we must all make a supreme effort to pour out a genuine spirit of kindness and hopeful love to peoples of various creeds and classes, and must abstain from all provocative language that may impede the effect of what true and continued kindness can produce.

Does not ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wish us, as He looks down upon us with loving expectation from His glorious Station, to obliterate as much as possible all traces of censure, of conflicting discussions, of cooling remarks, of petty unnecessary observations that impede the onward march of the Cause, that damp the zeal of the firm believer and detract from the sublimity of the Bahá’í Cause in the eyes of the inquirer? In order, however, to insure fair and quick and vigorous action whenever such an evil activity is revealed and has been carefully ascertained, the best and only means would appear to be, for the careful observer, once he is assured of such an evil action, and has grown hopeless of the attitude of kindness and forbearance, to report it quietly to the Spiritual Assembly representative of the friends in that locality and submit the case to their earnest and full consideration. Should the majority of the members of that Assembly be conscientiously convinced of the case—and this being a national issue affecting the body of the friends in America—it should, only through the intermediary of that Assembly, be cautiously communicated to that greater body representing all the Assemblies in America, which will in its turn obtain all the available data from the local Assembly in question, study carefully the situation and reserve for itself the ultimate decision. It may, if it decides so, refer to the

Holy Land for further consideration and consultation.

This clearly places heavy responsibilities on the local as well as national Assemblies, which in the course of time will evolve, with the Master's power and guidance, into the local and national Houses of Justice. Hence the vital necessity of having a local Spiritual Assembly in every locality where the number of adult declared believers exceeds nine, and of making provision for the indirect election of a Body that shall adequately represent the interests of all the friends and Assemblies throughout the American Continent.

A perusal of some of the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the duties and functions of the Spiritual Assemblies in every land (later to be designated as the local Houses of Justice), emphatically reveals the sacredness of their nature, the wide scope of their activity, and the grave responsibility which rests upon them.

Addressing the members of the Spiritual Assembly in Chicago, the Master reveals the following:—"Whenever ye enter the council-chamber, recite this prayer with a heart throbbing with the love of God and a tongue purified from all but His remembrance, that the All-powerful may graciously aid you to achieve supreme victory:—'O God, my God! We are servants of Thine that have turned with devotion to Thy Holy Face, that have detached ourselves from all beside Thee in this glorious Day. We have gathered in this spiritual assembly, united in our views and thoughts, with our purposes harmonized to exalt Thy Word amidst mankind. O Lord, our God! Make us the signs of Thy Divine Guidance, the Standards of Thy exalted Faith amongst men, servants to Thy mighty Covenant. O Thou our Lord Most High! Manifestations of Thy Divine Unity in Thine Abhá Kingdom , and resplendent stars shining upon all regions. Lord! Aid us to become seas surging with the billows of Thy wondrous Grace, streams flowing from Thy all-glorious Heights, goodly fruits upon the Tree of Thy heavenly Cause, trees waving through the breezes of Thy Bounty in Thy celestial Vineyard. O God! Make our souls dependent upon the Verses of Thy Divine Unity, our

hearts cheered with the outpourings of Thy Grace, that we may unite even as the waves of one sea and become merged together as the rays of Thine Effulgent Light; that our thoughts, our views, our feelings may become as one reality, manifesting 21 the spirit of union throughout the world. Thou art the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Almighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate.'"

In the Most Holy Book is revealed:—"The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Bahá, and should it exceed this number it does not matter. It behooveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. Thus hath the Lord your God commanded you. Beware lest ye put away that which is clearly revealed in His Tablet. Fear God, O ye that perceive."

Furthermore, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reveals the following:—"It is incumbent upon every one not to take any step without consulting the Spiritual Assembly, and they must assuredly obey with heart and soul its bidding and be submissive unto it, that things may be properly ordered and well arranged. Otherwise every person will act independently and after his own judgment, will follow his own desire, and do harm to the Cause."

"The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them. In this day, assemblies of consultation are of the greatest importance and a vital necessity. Obedience unto them is essential and obligatory. The members thereof must take counsel together in such wise that no occasion

for ill-feeling or discord may arise. This can be attained when every member expresseth with absolute freedom his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should any one oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions. If after discussion, a decision be carried unanimously, well and good; but if, the Lord forbid, differences of opinion should arise, a majority of voices must prevail."

Enumerating the obligations incumbent upon the members of consulting councils, the Beloved reveals the following:—"The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be non-existent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught. The second condition:—They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. The honored members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. It is again not permitted that any one of the honored members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously, though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision from being enforced. In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light, and should the least

trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness.... If this be so regarded, that assembly shall be of God, but otherwise it shall lead to coolness and alienation that proceed from the Evil One. Discussions must all be confined to spiritual matters that pertain to the training of souls, the instruction of children, the relief of the poor, the help of the feeble throughout all classes in the world, kindness to all peoples, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Holy Word. Should they endeavor to fulfill these conditions 23 the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the center of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit." So great is the importance and so supreme is the authority of these assemblies that once 'Abdu'l-Bahá after having himself and in his own handwriting corrected the translation made into Arabic of the Ishráqát (the Effulgences) by Sheikh Faraj , a Kurdish friend from Cairo, directed him in a Tablet to submit the above-named translation to the Spiritual Assembly of Cairo, that he may seek from them before publication their approval and consent. These are His very words in that Tablet:—"His honor, Sheikh Faraju'llah , has here rendered into Arabic with greatest care the Ishráqát and yet I have told him that he must submit his version to the Spiritual Assembly of Egypt, and I have conditioned its publication upon the approval of the above-named Assembly . This is so that things may be arranged in an orderly manner, for should it not be so any one may translate a certain Tablet and print and circulate it on his own account. Even a non-believer might undertake such work, and thus cause confusion and disorder. If it be conditioned, however, upon the approval of the Spiritual Assembly, a translation prepared, printed and circulated by a non-believer will have no recognition whatever."

This is indeed a clear indication of the Master's express desire that **nothing whatever should be given to the public by any individual among the friends, unless fully considered and approved by the Spiritual Assembly in his locality;** and if this (as is undoubtedly the

case) is a matter that pertains to the general interest of the Cause in that land, then it is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assembly to submit it to the consideration and approval of the national body representing all the various local assemblies. Not only with regard to publication, but all matters without any exception whatsoever, regarding the interests of the Cause in that locality, individually or collectively, should be referred exclusively to the Spiritual Assembly in that locality, which shall decide upon it, unless it be a matter of national interest, in which case it shall be referred to the national body. With this national body also will rest the decision whether a given question is of local or national interest. (By national affairs is not meant matters that are political in their character, for the friends of God the world over are strictly forbidden to meddle with political affairs in any way whatever, but rather things that affect the spiritual activities of the body of the friends in that land.)

Full harmony, however, as well as cooperation among the various local assemblies and the members themselves, and particularly between each assembly and the national body, is of the utmost importance, for upon it depends the unity of the Cause of God, the solidarity of the friends, the full, speedy and efficient working of the spiritual activities of His loved ones.

Large issues in such spiritual activities that affect the Cause in general in that land, such as the management of the "Star of the West" and any periodical which the National Body may decide to be a Bahá'í organ, the matter of publication, or reprinting Bahá'í literature and its distribution among the various assemblies, the means whereby the teaching campaign may be stimulated and maintained, the work of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár , the racial question in relation to the Cause, the matter of receiving Orientals and association with them, the care and maintenance of the precious film exhibiting a phase of the Master's sojourn in the United States of America as well as the original matrix and the records of His voice, and various other national spiritual activities, far from being under the exclusive jurisdiction of any local assembly or group of friends, must each be minutely and fully directed by a special board, elected by the National

Body, constituted as a committee thereof, responsible to it and upon which the National Body shall exercise constant and general supervision.

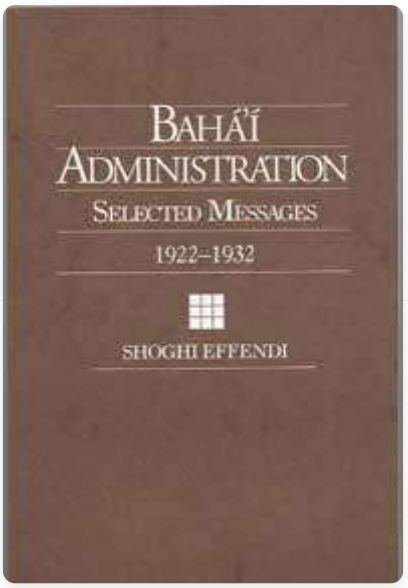
The time is indeed ripe for the manifold activities, wherein the servants and handmaids of Bahá'u'lláh are so devoutly and earnestly engaged, to be harmonized and conducted with unity, cooperation and efficiency, that the effect of such a combined and systematized effort, through which an All-powerful Spirit is steadily pouring, may transcend every other achievement of the past, however glorious it has been, and may stand, now that, to the eyes of the outside world the glorious Person of the Master is no more, a convincing testimony of the potency of His everliving Spirit.

Your brother and co-worker in His Cause,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

March 5, 1922



Comments

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On March 5, 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book...When completed, this translation should not, the Guardian feels, be printed entirely and circulated among the believers. But only extracts of it should, with the approval of your N.S.A., be brought to the attention of the friends until such time as the publication of the whole book would be deemed advisable."

On December 27, 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

William McElwee Miller and Earl E. Elder's translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1961 as *Al-kitab al-aqdas or The most holy book*, some thirty years before the Bahá'í Administrative Order 's authorized translation in 1992.

What I particularly like about the Elder & Miller translation is that it uses contemporary English. The 1992 translation commissioned by Universal House of Justice unnecessarily uses words like "hath," "heareth," "thy," and "ye" in an attempt to mimic the tone of the King James Version of the Bible.

In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the

internet.

My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.

> The Universal House of Justice
>
> 5 March 1993
>
> To the Bahá'ís of the World
>
> Dearly loved Friends,
>
> The Kitáb-i-Aqdas—the Book described in such exalted terms by the Guardian of the Cause of God as "that priceless treasury enshrining for all time the brightest emanations of the mind of Bahá'u'lláh, the Charter of His World Order, the chief repository of His laws, the Harbinger of His Covenant, the Pivotal Work containing some of His noblest exhortations, weightiest pronouncements, and portentous prophecies, and revealed during the full tide of His tribulations, at a time when the rulers of the earth had definitely forsaken Him"—this Most Holy Book, we have the honor to announce, will, in a copiously annotated English translation, be released to the Community of Bahá at Naw-Rúz.
>
> Bahá'u'lláh's own designations of the Book—the "Unerring Balance," the "Straight Path," the "quickener of mankind," the "source of true felicity"—indicate its phenomenal importance, an importance which staggers the mind when viewed in light of the realization that this Book is, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, the "principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the 'new heaven' and the 'new earth,' as 'the Tabernacle of God,' as the 'Holy City,' as the 'Bride,' the 'New Jerusalem coming down from God.'" Such metaphors of hope have been recited from sacred scriptures down the ages, have fired the imagination and excited the expectations of unnumbered generations, and now, at long last, in this new Dispensation, have been given tangible form by the Promised One of All

Ages in this Mother Book of His Revelation.

The publication of the Book in English satisfies a major goal of the Six Year Plan. But even beyond this, it initiates the fulfillment of a prospect voiced by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who anticipated its publication in various languages; it realizes an intention cherished by Shoghi Effendi, who had himself translated substantial portions of it into English which he diffused through his letters and in his compilations of Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings, and who had also, “as an essential prelude to the eventual translation and publication of its entire text,” initiated steps in 1955 for the preparation of a Synopsis and Codification of the Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. This was a task on which he made considerable progress and which was completed by the Universal House of Justice in 1973, on the hundredth anniversary of the revelation of the Book which occurred, as Shoghi Effendi confirmed, “soon after Bahá’u’lláh had been transferred to the house of ‘Údí Khammár (circa 1873), at a time when He was still encompassed by the tribulations that had afflicted Him, through the acts committed by His enemies and the professed adherents of His Faith.”

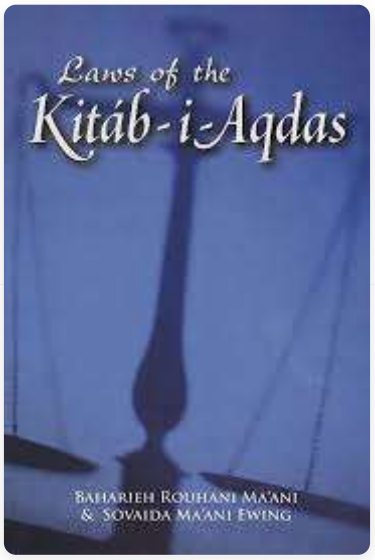
The accessibility to Western readers of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in full authorized text, for the first time in one of their major languages, enormously extends the sphere of its influence, opening wider the door to a vast process of individual and community development which must certainly exert an increasingly powerful, transformative effect on peoples and nations as the Book is translated further into other languages. That the English edition of this highly treasured and incalculably potent work should appear now amid the welter of a world at odds with itself is a demonstration of confidence in the ultimate emergence of a peaceful, civilized, global society. That it should be published during the period of the centenary of both the Ascension of its divine Author and the inauguration of His Covenant amplifies the striking impact, already felt, of the Holy Year which marks so important an anniversary.

A Book of such indescribable holiness is itself a symbol of the incomparable

greatness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and is, indeed, a potent reminder of the high respect which is due to all that has flowed from His prodigious, truth-bearing pen. May the friends of God ever be mindful of its exalted rank among the sacred texts of the Faith; treasure it as the bread of life; regard possession of it as a sacred honor, as a priceless legacy from the Pen of the Most High, as a source of God's greatest bounty to His creatures; place their whole trust in its provisions; recite its verses; study its contents; adhere to its exhortations; and thus transform their lives in accordance with the divine standard.

Let us rejoice. Let us be filled with the felicitous spirit evoked in the Blessed Beauty's own announcement of the Mother Book of His Dispensation when He said: "We announce unto everyone the joyful tidings concerning that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book—a Book from above whose horizon the day-star of My commandments shineth upon every observer and every observed one." May we be such upholders of its laws and principles as to deserve His gloriously promised benediction: "Blessed those who peruse it. Blessed those who apprehend it. Blessed those who meditate upon it. Blessed those who ponder its meaning. So vast is its range that it hath encompassed all men ere their recognition of it. Ere long will its sovereign power, its pervasive influence and the greatness of its might be manifested on earth. Verily, thy God is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed."

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



Comments

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> [AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]
>
> 5 March 2009
>
> To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith
>
> Dearly loved Friends,
>
> In recent weeks, world attention has been focused more intently than ever before on the wave of persecution engulfing the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in Iran. The spurious character of the charges levelled against the seven members of the Yárán, the injustice of the treatment meted out to other innocent Bahá'í prisoners, and the prolongation of the repression of the community of the Most Great Name are increasingly the subject of public discussion and debate. The resolve and steadfastness you have exhibited and the extraordinary powers of concentration you have shown in carrying forward your day-to-day affairs, in discharging your spiritual duties and in serving your country, together with the dignity you have manifested and the constructive resilience of spirit you have evinced in the face of countless hardships—these have won you widespread admiration.
>
> The Prosecutor General of Iran has recently declared illegal the existence of the Yárán and the Khádimín. This is an astonishing assertion, given that, for some twenty years, government agencies have had regular contact with them and have been aware of their activities. From the confines of prison, the members of the Yárán have made clear their view that, if indeed the government no longer considers acceptable present arrangements for administering the affairs of the Bahá'í community, it would pose no major obstacle to bring these arrangements to a close. In so doing, the community

would, they have emphasized, demonstrate once again its goodwill to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as it has done heretofore.

We find the decision of the Yárán to be both wise and appropriate under the circumstances. In view of the current imprisonment of these trusted ones of God, who have served with such ability and discernment their spiritual brothers and sisters in their homeland, responsibility for implementing this decision now rests on the Khádimín across the country. These dearly cherished souls have, in turn, demonstrated exemplary self-sacrifice in the path of service to the Cause of God. Knowing full well their skill and resourcefulness, we are confident that they will bring their work to a close in a suitable manner, taking into account all necessary considerations. That the Yárán and the Khádimín have ceased their collective functioning will not, we are certain, unduly concern the beleaguered Bahá'í community of Iran. You, the much-loved and sorely tried friends in the Cradle of the Faith of God, valiant knights in the arena of servitude and fidelity, will draw on the power inherent in unity and mutual support and, aided by divine confirmations, will find appropriate ways of managing your spiritual and social affairs and engaging in service to your nation and its citizens. The illustrious record of your community over one hundred and sixty-five years can but reinforce this conviction.

In collaboration with the agencies of the United Nations, as well as human rights activists and progressive thinkers everywhere, National Spiritual Assemblies spanning the globe are striving with renewed vigour to defend the rights you have been so long denied. The Bahá'í International Community addressed an open letter on 4 March 2009 to the Prosecutor General, setting out certain fundamental points in response to his announcement. During these blessed days of the Fast, your fellow believers throughout the world hold you especially in their prayers and, conscious of the spiritual forces released through your courage and sacrifice, are sparing no effort to ensure the advancement of the Cause of God and the promotion of the well-being and prosperity of humankind. In the Holy Shrines we offer supplications on your behalf and, with utmost fervour and devotion,

beseech the Abhá Beauty that He may bestow justice and fairness upon clerics and rulers alike and that the day of your emancipation from the fetters of baseless prejudice and long-standing oppression may be hastened.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

March 5. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book..."

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On December 27, 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

William McElwee Miller and Earl E. Elder's translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1961 as *Al-kitab al-aqdas or The most holy book* , some thirty years before the Bahá'í Administrative Order 's authorized translation in 1992.

What I particularly like about the Elder & Miller translation is that it uses contemporary English. The 1992 translation commissioned by Universal House of Justice unnecessarily uses words like "hath," "heareth," "thy," and "ye" in an attempt to mimic the tone of the King James Version of the Bible .

In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the

internet.

My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.

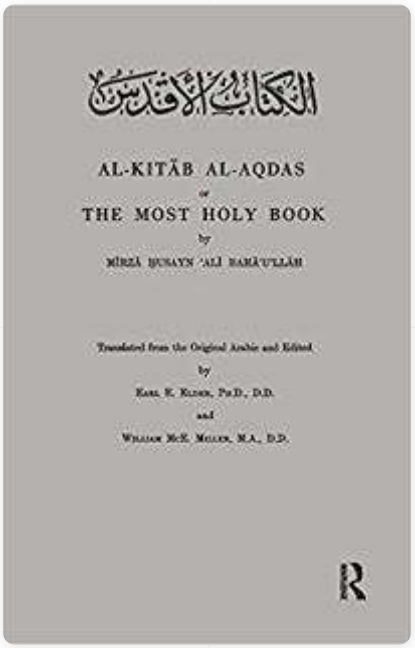
> 5 March 1935 Dear Dr. Muhlschlegel,
>
> The Guardian has received and carefully considered your letter of the 24th of February last, and wishes me to thank you for it.
>
> **With reference to your questions concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book, in view of the fact that all these versions, both English and Russian, are not authoritative and hence may misrepresent altogether the Teachings.**
>
> He would, however, suggest that your N.S.A. should appoint a Committee for the purpose of undertaking the translation of the "Aqdas" into German. This is of course a peculiarly difficult task, as some of the members of such a committee should have sufficient knowledge of the Arabic language, and in addition should be well versed in the history and teachings of Islam.
>
> The Guardian hopes, nevertheless, that with your knowledge of Arabic and German you may be able to do something truly worthwhile and substantial in this connection. Your translation, of course, will not be considered as final. But for the present it would be of a great assistance to the friends in Germany who, as you rightly suggest, have a great desire to get acquainted with the laws and precepts of the Cause as recorded in the "Aqdas".
>
> **When completed, this translation should not, the Guardian feels, be printed entirely and circulated among the believers. But only extracts of it should, with the approval of your N.S.A., be brought to the attention of the friends until such time as the publication of the whole book would be deemed advisable....**

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

May our beloved and vigilant Master even keep you under His wings, and inspire you to promote far and wide and in a most effective manner the manifold interests of His Faith and its ever-developing institutions.

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi



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Born in 1922 in Iran, Mas'ud Khamsi left Iran in 1957 to pioneer to South America during the Ten Year Crusade .

Mas'ud Khamsi served as an inaugural member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of La Paz, Bolivia, when it was established in 1960. He served on the joint National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay in the early 1960's, and was elected as the inaugural Chairman of the independent National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia when it was established in 1961. In 1962 he was appointed an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection for the Western Hemisphere, succeeding Mildred Mottahedeh . In 1963 he spoke at the Bahá'í World Congress during a session on pioneering.

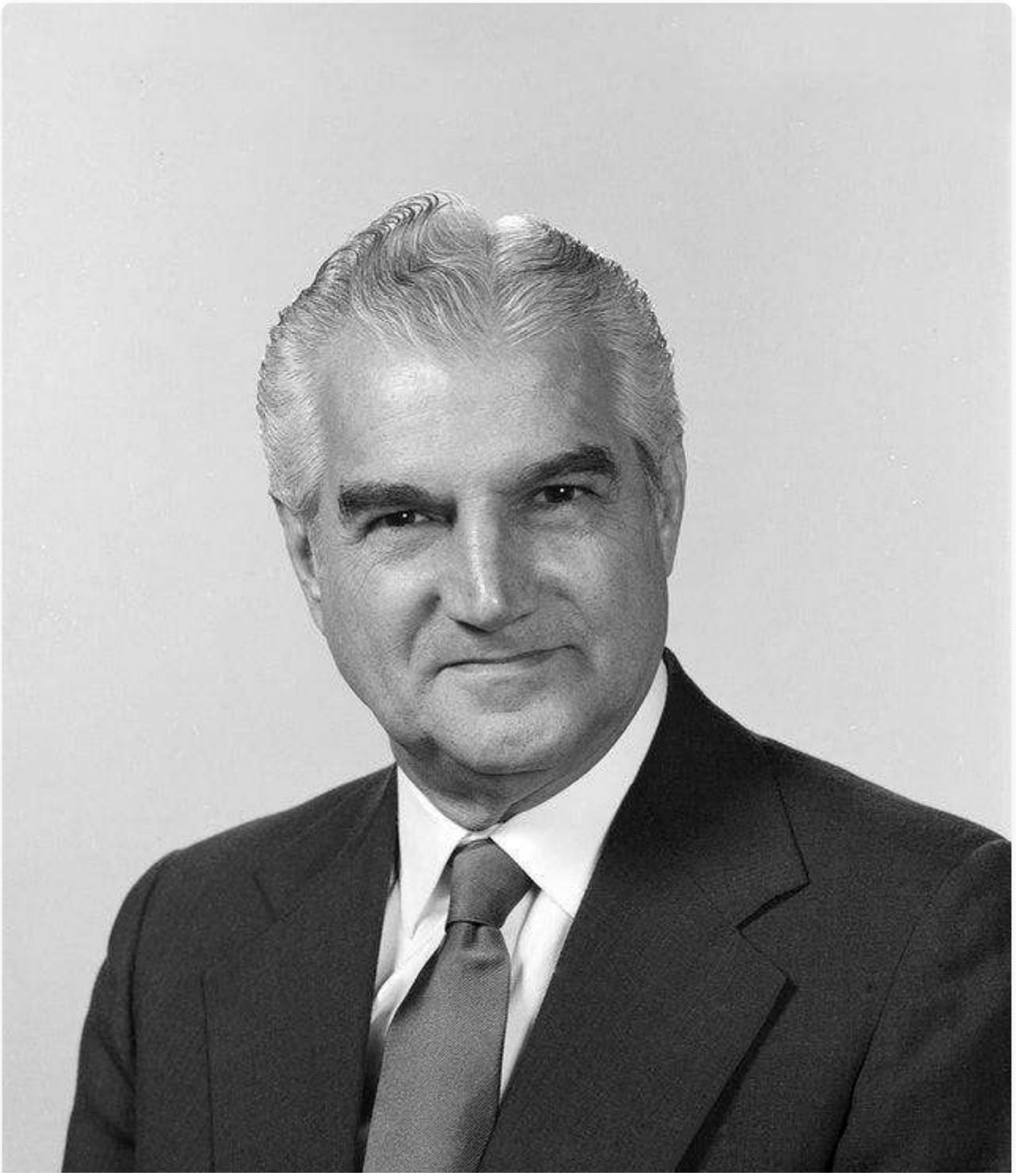
He returned to Iran at some point in the 1960's and was appointed as an inaugural Counselor for West Asia in 1968. He returned to South America in 1969, and was appointed as a Counsellor for South America. He traveled across South America extensively in his role as Counsellor, and accompanied Rúḥíyyih Khánum on the Green Light Expedition, a lengthy teaching tour of South America undertaken by boat in 1975. He was appointed the Trustee of the Continental Funds of South America in 1976, in addition to continuing to serve as Counsellor.

In 1962, in his role as an Auxiliary Board Member, Mas'ud Khamsi was sent to Chile along with Abu'l-Qásim Faizi in order to investigate (also mentioned here) "members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile, residing in Loncoche, Fabienne. Guillon and Sr. Pallés, [who] have become Covenant-breakers , supporting the false claims of

Mason Remey ."

In 1983 Mas'ud Khamsi was appointed to the International Teaching Centre for a five year term. In 1985 he, and Ruth Pringle, accompanied Rúḥíyyih Khánum to a meeting with Panama's Minister of Government and Minister of Justice to discuss the construction of a radio station by the countr's National Spiritual Assembly. He was reappointed to the ITC for a second five year term in 1988, and retired from the body in 1993.

On March 5, 2013, Mas'ud Khamsi died in Lima, Peru.



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Lloyd G. Gardner was born in Toronto on March 5, 1915 as the youngest of four children. His father was Ernest, a jeweller. Lloyd followed his father into the jewelling business when he was fourteen, specializing in diamond setting. He played tennis at a high level, and discovered the Faith in 1937 at a camp he attended with his tennis partner in Ontario. The camp owner was a Bahá'í who put them in touch with the Toronto Bahá'í community, which included Howard Colby Ives and Mabel Ives at the time. He became a Bahá'í in 1938, and considered Mabel Ives his spiritual mother.

Lloyd was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ontario in 1938, and assisted in organizing the first Canadian Bahá'í Summer School held at Rice Lake in Ontario the same year. At the opening of WWII Lloyd was conscripted for military service, he request non-combatant duty and trained as a shipboard medic. He was stationed in Halifax for most of the war, and helped establish the Local Spiritual Assembly of Halifax. In 1945 he was stationed in St. John's, Newfoundland, and he opened the territory to the Faith, holding a public talk on the Faith. After the war he returned to Toronto, where he was re-elected to the Local Assembly, and appointed to the National Youth Teaching Committee.

In 1948 Lloyd was elected to the first independent National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, and he served on the body for the next twenty years. In 1949 he married Helen Smith, a fellow Canadian Bahá'í, and they pioneered to North York, Ontario, living there until pioneering to Oshawa in 1951, where their children Nancy and David were born. In 1954 Lloyd read a reading at the Memorial for Dorothy Baker at the

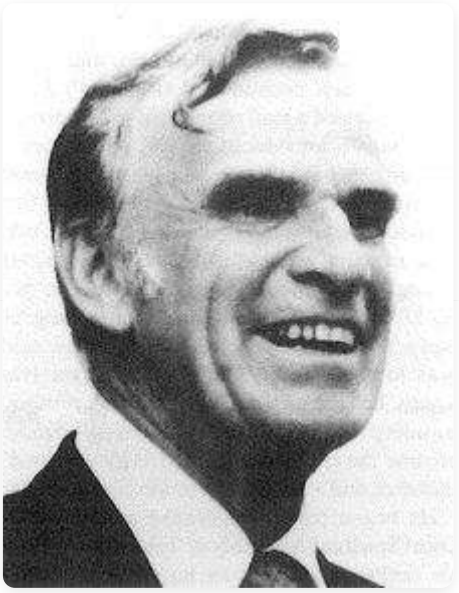
House of Worship in Illinois, representing the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly. In 1956 Lloyd spoke at the Dedication of the National Haziratu'l-Quds of Canada in Toronto. In 1958 Lloyd spoke at the Dedication of a Temple Site at North York, Ontario, which was to be the site of a second House of Worship in America, although it has not yet been constructed. In 1963 he attended the first International Convention in Haifa and acted as a teller for the election of the first Universal House of Justice.

Lloyd was appointed as an inaugural Continental Counsellor for North America in 1968 for an indefinite term by the Universal House of Justice, stepping down from the Canadian National Assembly to serve in the role. In June 1969 he attended a Deepening Conference held by the Continental Board of Counsellors held in Halifax. In July 1970 he served on the Faculty of the Juneau Summer School in Alaska. In 1971 he attended the North Atlantic Oceanic Conference held in Reykjavik, Iceland. In 1972 he attended the United States National Convention. In 1973 he attended the Canadian National Convention. In September 1973 he attended a National Bahá'í Conference held in St. Louis which was attended by 10,000, making it the largest Convention held. In late August and early September 1975 Lloyd participated in a week of proclamation and deepening activities held to commemorate the Anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's 1912 visit to Canada. In 1978 Lloyd attended the first National Convention of the Bahamas. At the close of 1978 and beginning of 1979 Lloyd helped maintain momentum in a vast teaching campaign in Canada, which led to the formation of twenty-three Local Spiritual Assemblies.

In 1980 the Universal House of Justice merged the Continental Boards for North, Central, and South America into the Continental Board for the Americas, and introduced five year terms for Counsellors. Lloyd was appointed to the new body, and appointed as Trustee of the Continental Fund. In 1982 he visited Guyana, and spoke at a meeting in Georgetown. In September 1982 he spoke at an International Conference held in the Olympic Velodrome in Montreal, giving a report on the progress of the Seven Year Plan . In 1983 he attended the Canadian National Convention. In June 1983 he visited Holsteinsborg, a settlement north of the Artic Circle, for the Greenland Bahá'í Summer School. In 1984 he spoke at the International Bahá'í Youth Conference held in Canada. In November 1984 he participated in the Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies held in Ottawa.

Lloyd died in Bolivia on March 5, 1985, shortly after a teaching trip to St. Lucia and Barbados, and a meeting of the Counsellors of the Americas in Bolivia. The Universal House of Justice issued the following statement:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING ESTEEMED LLOYD GARDNER STALWART DEFENDER INTERESTS FAITH AMERICAS. HIS DISTINGUISHED LONGTIME SERVICE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CANADA AND MEMBERSHIP BOARD COUNSELLORS AMERICAS SINCE INCEPTION MARKED BY INDEFATIGABLE LABORS ALL ASPECTS TEACHING WORK AND COMMUNITY LIFE NOTABLY YOUTH ACTIVITIES. HIS STERLING CHARACTER HIGH INTEGRITY WARMHEARTED NATURE TOTAL DEDICATION FAITH WORTHY EMULATION. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS LUMINOUS SPIRIT ABHA KINGDOM AND SOLACE HIS SORROWING FAMILY. ADVISING ALL COMMUNITIES AMERICAS OFFER PRAYERS IN HIS NAME. REQUESTING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING TEMPLE WILMETTE



Comments

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March 5. On this date in 2008, Mahvash Sabet was born. She is one of the Yaran , the ad hoc administrative structure established in Iran after that country banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order .

Born Mahvash Shahriyari on February 4, 1953 in Ardestan, Mahvash Sabet moved to Tehran when she was in the fifth grade. In university, she studied psychology, obtaining a bachelor's degree.

She began her professional career as a teacher and also worked as a principal at several schools. In her professional role, she also collaborated with the National Literacy Committee of Iran. After the Islamic revolution, however, she was fired from her job and blocked from working in public education.

After her termination from public education, she became director of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, where she also has taught psychology and management.

She married Siyvash Sabet on May 21, 1973. They have a son, Foroud Sabet, and a daughter, Negar Sabet, both born in Hamadan.

While all of the other Yaran were arrested at their homes in Tehran on May 14, 2008, Mahvash Sabet was arrested in Mashhad on March 5, 2008, where she had been summoned by the Ministry of Intelligence.

Sabet was released from Evin prison on September 18, 2017.

While in prison, Sabet wrote a number of poems. These were eventually adapted by Bahiyyih Nakhjavani from translations into English from the original Persian completed by Violette and Ali Nakhjavani. These English adaptations were published by George Ronald in 2013.

On October 10, 2017, Mahvash Sabet was named 2017 International Writer of Courage by PEN International and co-winner of the annual Pinter Prize.

Comments

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Published on: March 04, 2026

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> 1695. There Were No Followers of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh from the Far East During Their Ministry
>
> "As there were no followers of the Bab or Bahá'u'lláh derived from the religions of the Far East in Their days, this may be the reason that they did not address any Tablets directly to these people. Also we must remember that every religion springs from some root, and just as Christianity sprang from Judaism, our own religion sprang from Islam, and that is why so many of the teachings deduct their proofs from Islam."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 5, 1957)
>
> "The teachings bear no reference to any genealogical tie between the Prophets of the Near and Far East."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 31, 1941)

Comments

No comments.

March 5. On this date in 1855, John Henry Hyde-Dunn was born in London, England. Posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi, he and his wife Clara were the first Bahá'ís in Australia and among the earliest Bahá'ís to teach in New Zealand.

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In 1907 John Henry Hyde, then married to Fannie Dunn, met Clara in Walla Walla, Washington, when he and Nathan Ward Fitzgerald sought to place an advertisement for a Bahá'í meeting they were holding in the medical office she was working at. She attended the meeting and later became a Bahá'í. John and Clara met again when attending a talk given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá when he visited California in 1912, and the two would get married.

On April 10, 1919, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn disembarked from their ship in Sydney, opening Australia to the Bahá'í Faith .

Perhaps the most famous Australian Bahá'í is Cathy Freeman , an Aborigine who in the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics had the honor of lighting the stadium's Olympic flame in the cauldron within a circle of fire. She also carried the Australian Flag and Aboriginal flag after winning the 400 meter race at the Sydney Olympic Games.

Cathy Freeman had her Bahá'í administrative rights suspended for political activism on behalf of Aboriginal Australians.

It is worth remembering 'Abdu'l-Bahá's views on native, indigenous people and cultures.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell (later named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

> Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.
>
> If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed**

with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his

soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage;**

now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools

and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, “We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything.” But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature’s laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

No comments.

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Published on: March 04, 2026

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> Dear fellow-workers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh:—
>
> It is with words of regret and disappointment that I desire to open this letter because of my inability, in view of my manifold and pressing duties, to respond individually and in writing to the many messages of love and sympathy and of hope that you have so affectionately sent me since our Beloved's passing from this World . I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of the bereaved ladies of the Household when I say that however desirous we may be to correspond separately with every one of you, the grave responsibilities and manifold duties now devolved upon us make it regrettably impossible to express in written messages to every friend what we constantly feel in our hearts, and pray for when visiting His sacred Shrine.
>
> At this grave and momentous period through which the Cause of God in conformity with the Divine Wisdom is passing, it is the sacred duty of every one of us to endeavor to realize the full significance of this Hour of

Transition, and then to make a supreme resolve to arise steadfastly for the fulfilment of our sacred obligations.

Great as is the love and paternal care which our beloved Master is extending to us from on High, and unique as is the Spirit that animates today His servants in the world, yet a great deal will depend upon the character and efforts of His loved ones on whom now rests the responsibility of carrying on His work gloriously after Him. How great is the need at this moment when the promised outpourings of His grace are ready to be extended to every soul, for us all to form a broad vision of the mission of the Cause to mankind, and to do all in our power to spread it throughout the world! The eyes of the world, now that the sublime Personality of the Master has been removed from this visible plane, are turned with eager anticipation to us who are named after His name, and on whom rests primarily the responsibility to keep burning the torch that He has lit in this world. How keenly I feel at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause the need for **a firm and definite determination to subordinate all our personal likings, our local interests, to the interests and requirements of the Cause of God!** Now is the time to set aside, nay, to forget altogether, minor considerations regarding our internal relationships, and to present a solid united front to the world animated by no other desire but to serve and propagate His Cause.

It is my firm conviction which I now express with all sincerity and candor, that the dignity and unity of the Cause urgently demands—particularly throughout the American continent—that the ** friends should in their words and conduct emphasize and give absolute prominence to the constructive dynamic principles of Bahá'u'lláh, rather than attach undue importance to His negative Teachings.** With hearts cleansed from the least trace of suspicion and filled with hope and faith in what the spirit of love can achieve, we must one and all endeavor at this moment to forget past impressions, and with absolute good-will and genuine cooperation unite in deepening and diffusing the spirit of love and service that the Cause has thus far so remarkably shown to the world. To this attitude of

good-will, of forbearance and genuine kindness to all, must be added, however, constant but unprovocative vigilance, lest unrestricted association with the peoples of the world should enable the very few who have been definitely pronounced by the Master as injurious to the body of the Cause, to make a breach in the Movement. Not until, however, an unmistakable evidence should appear, manifestly revealing the evil motives of a certain individual or group of individuals , is it advisable to make the matter public; for an untimely declaration that shall give rise to open differences among the friends is far more detrimental than forbearing still further with those who are suspected of evil intentions. As the Master so fully and consistently did throughout His lifetime, we must all make a supreme effort to pour out a genuine spirit of kindness and hopeful love to peoples of various creeds and classes, and must abstain from all provocative language that may impede the effect of what true and continued kindness can produce.

Does not ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wish us, as He looks down upon us with loving expectation from His glorious Station, to obliterate as much as possible all traces of censure, of conflicting discussions, of cooling remarks, of petty unnecessary observations that impede the onward march of the Cause, that damp the zeal of the firm believer and detract from the sublimity of the Bahá’í Cause in the eyes of the inquirer? In order, however, to insure fair and quick and vigorous action whenever such an evil activity is revealed and has been carefully ascertained, the best and only means would appear to be, for the careful observer, once he is assured of such an evil action, and has grown hopeless of the attitude of kindness and forbearance, to report it quietly to the Spiritual Assembly representative of the friends in that locality and submit the case to their earnest and full consideration. Should the majority of the members of that Assembly be conscientiously convinced of the case—and this being a national issue affecting the body of the friends in America—it should, only through the intermediary of that Assembly, be cautiously communicated to that greater body representing all the Assemblies in America, which will in its turn obtain all the available data

from the local Assembly in question, study carefully the situation and reserve for itself the ultimate decision. It may, if it decides so, refer to the Holy Land for further consideration and consultation.

This clearly places heavy responsibilities on the local as well as national Assemblies, which in the course of time will evolve, with the Master's power and guidance, into the local and national Houses of Justice. Hence the vital necessity of having a local Spiritual Assembly in every locality where the number of adult declared believers exceeds nine, and of making provision for the indirect election of a Body that shall adequately represent the interests of all the friends and Assemblies throughout the American Continent.

A perusal of some of the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the duties and functions of the Spiritual Assemblies in every land (later to be designated as the local Houses of Justice), emphatically reveals the sacredness of their nature, the wide scope of their activity, and the grave responsibility which rests upon them.

Addressing the members of the Spiritual Assembly in Chicago, the Master reveals the following:—"Whenever ye enter the council-chamber, recite this prayer with a heart throbbing with the love of God and a tongue purified from all but His remembrance, that the All-powerful may graciously aid you to achieve supreme victory:—'O God, my God! We are servants of Thine that have turned with devotion to Thy Holy Face, that have detached ourselves from all beside Thee in this glorious Day. We have gathered in this spiritual assembly, united in our views and thoughts, with our purposes harmonized to exalt Thy Word amidst mankind. O Lord, our God! Make us the signs of Thy Divine Guidance, the Standards of Thy exalted Faith amongst men, servants to Thy mighty Covenant. O Thou our Lord Most High! Manifestations of Thy Divine Unity in Thine Abhá Kingdom , and resplendent stars shining upon all regions. Lord! Aid us to become seas surging with the billows of Thy wondrous Grace, streams flowing from Thy all-glorious Heights, goodly fruits upon the Tree of Thy heavenly Cause,

trees waving through the breezes of Thy Bounty in Thy celestial Vineyard. O God! Make our souls dependent upon the Verses of Thy Divine Unity, our hearts cheered with the outpourings of Thy Grace, that we may unite even as the waves of one sea and become merged together as the rays of Thine Effulgent Light; that our thoughts, our views, our feelings may become as one reality, manifesting 21 the spirit of union throughout the world. Thou art the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Almighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate.'"

In the Most Holy Book is revealed:—"The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Bahá, and should it exceed this number it does not matter. It behooveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. Thus hath the Lord your God commanded you. Beware lest ye put away that which is clearly revealed in His Tablet. Fear God, O ye that perceive."

Furthermore, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reveals the following:—"It is incumbent upon every one not to take any step without consulting the Spiritual Assembly, and they must assuredly obey with heart and soul its bidding and be submissive unto it, that things may be properly ordered and well arranged. Otherwise every person will act independently and after his own judgment, will follow his own desire, and do harm to the Cause."

"The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them. In this day, assemblies of consultation are of the greatest importance and a

vital necessity. Obedience unto them is essential and obligatory. The members thereof must take counsel together in such wise that no occasion for ill-feeling or discord may arise. This can be attained when every member expresseth with absolute freedom his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should any one oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions. If after discussion, a decision be carried unanimously, well and good; but if, the Lord forbid, differences of opinion should arise, a majority of voices must prevail."

Enumerating the obligations incumbent upon the members of consulting councils, the Beloved reveals the following:—"The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be non-existent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught. The second condition:—They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. The honored members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. It is again not permitted that any one of the honored members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously, though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision

from being enforced. In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light, and should the least trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness.... If this be so regarded, that assembly shall be of God, but otherwise it shall lead to coolness and alienation that proceed from the Evil One. Discussions must all be confined to spiritual matters that pertain to the training of souls, the instruction of children, the relief of the poor, the help of the feeble throughout all classes in the world, kindness to all peoples, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Holy Word. Should they endeavor to fulfill these conditions 23 the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the center of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit." So great is the importance and so supreme is the authority of these assemblies that once 'Abdu'l-Bahá after having himself and in his own handwriting corrected the translation made into Arabic of the Ishráqát (the Effulgences) by Sheikh Faraj , a Kurdish friend from Cairo, directed him in a Tablet to submit the above-named translation to the Spiritual Assembly of Cairo, that he may seek from them before publication their approval and consent. These are His very words in that Tablet:—"His honor, Sheikh Faraju'llah , has here rendered into Arabic with greatest care the Ishráqát and yet I have told him that he must submit his version to the Spiritual Assembly of Egypt, and I have conditioned its publication upon the approval of the above-named Assembly . This is so that things may be arranged in an orderly manner, for should it not be so any one may translate a certain Tablet and print and circulate it on his own account. Even a non-believer might undertake such work, and thus cause confusion and disorder. If it be conditioned, however, upon the approval of the Spiritual Assembly, a translation prepared, printed and circulated by a non-believer will have no recognition whatever."

This is indeed a clear indication of the Master's express desire that **nothing whatever should be given to the public by any individual**

among the friends, unless fully considered and approved by the Spiritual Assembly in his locality; and if this (as is undoubtedly the case) is a matter that pertains to the general interest of the Cause in that land, then it is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assembly to submit it to the consideration and approval of the national body representing all the various local assemblies. Not only with regard to publication, but all matters without any exception whatsoever, regarding the interests of the Cause in that locality, individually or collectively, should be referred exclusively to the Spiritual Assembly in that locality, which shall decide upon it, unless it be a matter of national interest, in which case it shall be referred to the national body. With this national body also will rest the decision whether a given question is of local or national interest. (By national affairs is not meant matters that are political in their character, for the friends of God the world over are strictly forbidden to meddle with political affairs in any way whatever, but rather things that affect the spiritual activities of the body of the friends in that land.)

Full harmony, however, as well as cooperation among the various local assemblies and the members themselves, and particularly between each assembly and the national body, is of the utmost importance, for upon it depends the unity of the Cause of God, the solidarity of the friends, the full, speedy and efficient working of the spiritual activities of His loved ones.

Large issues in such spiritual activities that affect the Cause in general in that land, such as the management of the "Star of the West" and any periodical which the National Body may decide to be a Bahá'í organ, the matter of publication, or reprinting Bahá'í literature and its distribution among the various assemblies, the means whereby the teaching campaign may be stimulated and maintained, the work of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár , the racial question in relation to the Cause, the matter of receiving Orientals and association with them, the care and maintenance of the precious film exhibiting a phase of the Master's sojourn in the United States of America as well as the original matrix and the records of His voice, and various other national spiritual activities, far from being under the exclusive

jurisdiction of any local assembly or group of friends, must each be minutely and fully directed by a special board, elected by the National Body, constituted as a committee thereof, responsible to it and upon which the National Body shall exercise constant and general supervision.

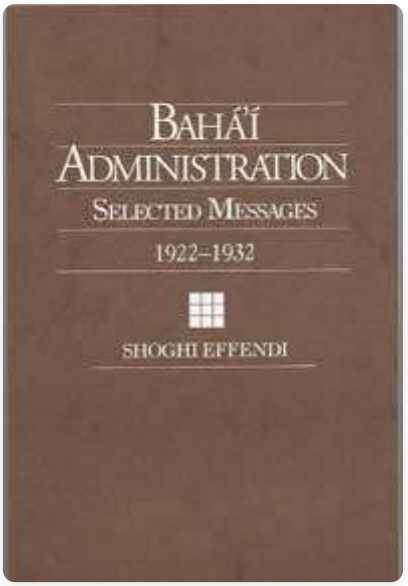
The time is indeed ripe for the manifold activities, wherein the servants and handmaids of Bahá'u'lláh are so devoutly and earnestly engaged, to be harmonized and conducted with unity, cooperation and efficiency, that the effect of such a combined and systematized effort, through which an All-powerful Spirit is steadily pouring, may transcend every other achievement of the past, however glorious it has been, and may stand, now that, to the eyes of the outside world the glorious Person of the Master is no more, a convincing testimony of the potency of His everliving Spirit.

Your brother and co-worker in His Cause,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

March 5, 1922



Comments

No comments.

March 5. On this date in 1993, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding the publication of an English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Published on: March 04, 2026

March 5. On this date in 1993, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding the publication of an English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

On March 5, 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book...When completed, this translation should not, the Guardian feels, be printed entirely and circulated among the believers. But only extracts of it should, with the approval of your N.S.A., be brought to the attention of the friends until such time as the publication of the whole book would be deemed advisable."

On December 27, 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

William McElwee Miller and Earl E. Elder's translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1961 as *Al-kitab al-aqdas or The most holy book*, some thirty years before the Bahá'í Administrative Order 's authorized translation in 1992.

What I particularly like about the Elder & Miller translation is that it uses contemporary English. The 1992 translation commissioned by Universal House of Justice unnecessarily uses words like "hath," "heareth," "thy," and "ye" in an attempt to mimic the tone of the King James Version of the Bible.

In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet.

My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.

> The Universal House of Justice
>
> 5 March 1993
>
> To the Bahá'ís of the World
>
> Dearly loved Friends,
>
> The Kitáb-i-Aqdas—the Book described in such exalted terms by the Guardian of the Cause of God as "that priceless treasury enshrining for all time the brightest emanations of the mind of Bahá'u'lláh, the Charter of His World Order, the chief repository of His laws, the Harbinger of His Covenant, the Pivotal Work containing some of His noblest exhortations, weightiest pronouncements, and portentous prophecies, and revealed during the full tide of His tribulations, at a time when the rulers of the earth had definitely forsaken Him"—this Most Holy Book, we have the honor to announce, will, in a copiously annotated English translation, be released to the Community of Bahá at Naw-Rúz.
>
> Bahá'u'lláh's own designations of the Book—the "Unerring Balance," the "Straight Path," the "quickener of mankind," the "source of true felicity"—indicate its phenomenal importance, an importance which staggers the mind when viewed in light of the realization that this Book is, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, the "principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the 'new heaven' and the 'new earth,' as 'the Tabernacle of God,' as the 'Holy City,' as the 'Bride,' the 'New Jerusalem coming down from God.'" Such metaphors of hope have been recited from sacred scriptures down the ages, have fired the imagination and excited the

expectations of unnumbered generations, and now, at long last, in this new Dispensation, have been given tangible form by the Promised One of All Ages in this Mother Book of His Revelation.

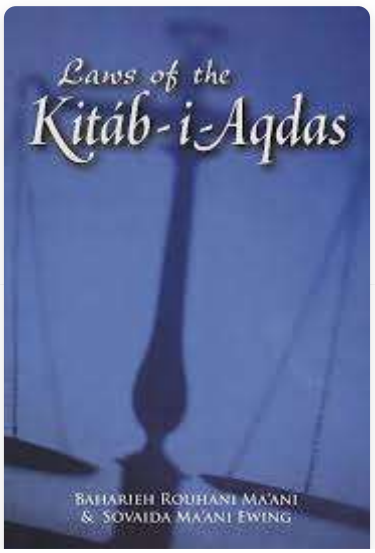
The publication of the Book in English satisfies a major goal of the Six Year Plan. But even beyond this, it initiates the fulfillment of a prospect voiced by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who anticipated its publication in various languages; it realizes an intention cherished by Shoghi Effendi, who had himself translated substantial portions of it into English which he diffused through his letters and in his compilations of Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings, and who had also, “as an essential prelude to the eventual translation and publication of its entire text,” initiated steps in 1955 for the preparation of a Synopsis and Codification of the Laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. This was a task on which he made considerable progress and which was completed by the Universal House of Justice in 1973, on the hundredth anniversary of the revelation of the Book which occurred, as Shoghi Effendi confirmed, “soon after Bahá’u’lláh had been transferred to the house of ‘Údí Khammár (circa 1873), at a time when He was still encompassed by the tribulations that had afflicted Him, through the acts committed by His enemies and the professed adherents of His Faith.”

The accessibility to Western readers of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in full authorized text, for the first time in one of their major languages, enormously extends the sphere of its influence, opening wider the door to a vast process of individual and community development which must certainly exert an increasingly powerful, transformative effect on peoples and nations as the Book is translated further into other languages. That the English edition of this highly treasured and incalculably potent work should appear now amid the welter of a world at odds with itself is a demonstration of confidence in the ultimate emergence of a peaceful, civilized, global society. That it should be published during the period of the centenary of both the Ascension of its divine Author and the inauguration of His Covenant amplifies the striking impact, already felt, of the Holy Year which marks so important an anniversary.

A Book of such indescribable holiness is itself a symbol of the incomparable greatness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and is, indeed, a potent reminder of the high respect which is due to all that has flowed from His prodigious, truth-bearing pen. May the friends of God ever be mindful of its exalted rank among the sacred texts of the Faith; treasure it as the bread of life; regard possession of it as a sacred honor, as a priceless legacy from the Pen of the Most High, as a source of God's greatest bounty to His creatures; place their whole trust in its provisions; recite its verses; study its contents; adhere to its exhortations; and thus transform their lives in accordance with the divine standard.

Let us rejoice. Let us be filled with the felicitous spirit evoked in the Blessed Beauty's own announcement of the Mother Book of His Dispensation when He said: "We announce unto everyone the joyful tidings concerning that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book—a Book from above whose horizon the day-star of My commandments shineth upon every observer and every observed one." May we be such upholders of its laws and principles as to deserve His gloriously promised benediction: "Blessed those who peruse it. Blessed those who apprehend it. Blessed those who meditate upon it. Blessed those who ponder its meaning. So vast is its range that it hath encompassed all men ere their recognition of it. Ere long will its sovereign power, its pervasive influence and the greatness of its might be manifested on earth. Verily, thy God is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed."

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



Comments

No comments.

March 5. On this date in 2009, the Universal House of Justice wrote Iranian Bahá'ís regarding the Yárán and the Khádimín.

Published on: March 04, 2026

March 5. On this date in 2009, the Universal House of Justice wrote Iranian Bahá'ís regarding the Yárán and the Khádimín.

> [AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]
>
> 5 March 2009
>
> To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith
>
> Dearly loved Friends,
>
> In recent weeks, world attention has been focused more intently than ever before on the wave of persecution engulfing the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in Iran. The spurious character of the charges levelled against the seven members of the Yárán, the injustice of the treatment meted out to other innocent Bahá'í prisoners, and the prolongation of the repression of the community of the Most Great Name are increasingly the subject of public discussion and debate. The resolve and steadfastness you have exhibited and the extraordinary powers of concentration you have shown in carrying forward your day-to-day affairs, in discharging your spiritual duties and in serving your country, together with the dignity you have manifested and the constructive resilience of spirit you have evinced in the face of countless hardships—these have won you widespread admiration.
>
> The Prosecutor General of Iran has recently declared illegal the existence of the Yárán and the Khádimín. This is an astonishing assertion, given that, for some twenty years, government agencies have had regular contact with them and have been aware of their activities. From the confines of prison, the members of the Yárán have made clear their view that, if indeed the government no longer considers acceptable present arrangements for

administering the affairs of the Bahá'í community, it would pose no major obstacle to bring these arrangements to a close. In so doing, the community would, they have emphasized, demonstrate once again its goodwill to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as it has done heretofore.

We find the decision of the Yárán to be both wise and appropriate under the circumstances. In view of the current imprisonment of these trusted ones of God, who have served with such ability and discernment their spiritual brothers and sisters in their homeland, responsibility for implementing this decision now rests on the Khádimín across the country. These dearly cherished souls have, in turn, demonstrated exemplary self-sacrifice in the path of service to the Cause of God. Knowing full well their skill and resourcefulness, we are confident that they will bring their work to a close in a suitable manner, taking into account all necessary considerations. That the Yárán and the Khádimín have ceased their collective functioning will not, we are certain, unduly concern the beleaguered Bahá'í community of Iran. You, the much-loved and sorely tried friends in the Cradle of the Faith of God, valiant knights in the arena of servitude and fidelity, will draw on the power inherent in unity and mutual support and, aided by divine confirmations, will find appropriate ways of managing your spiritual and social affairs and engaging in service to your nation and its citizens. The illustrious record of your community over one hundred and sixty-five years can but reinforce this conviction.

In collaboration with the agencies of the United Nations, as well as human rights activists and progressive thinkers everywhere, National Spiritual Assemblies spanning the globe are striving with renewed vigour to defend the rights you have been so long denied. The Bahá'í International Community addressed an open letter on 4 March 2009 to the Prosecutor General, setting out certain fundamental points in response to his announcement. During these blessed days of the Fast, your fellow believers throughout the world hold you especially in their prayers and, conscious of the spiritual forces released through your courage and sacrifice, are sparing no effort to ensure the advancement of the Cause of God and the promotion

of the well-being and prosperity of humankind. In the Holy Shrines we offer supplications on your behalf and, with utmost fervour and devotion, beseech the Abhá Beauty that He may bestow justice and fairness upon clerics and rulers alike and that the day of your emancipation from the fetters of baseless prejudice and long-standing oppression may be hastened.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

No comments.

March 5. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book..."

Published on: March 04, 2026

March 5. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" , he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book...When completed, this translation should not, the Guardian feels, be printed entirely and circulated among the believers. But only extracts of it should, with the approval of your N.S.A., be brought to the attention of the friends until such time as the publication of the whole book would be deemed advisable."

On December 27, 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

William McElwee Miller and Earl E. Elder's translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1961 as *Al-kitab al-aqdas or The most holy book* , some thirty years before the Bahá'í Administrative Order 's authorized translation in 1992.

What I particularly like about the Elder & Miller translation is that it uses contemporary English. The 1992 translation commissioned by Universal House of Justice unnecessarily uses words like "hath," "heareth," "thy," and "ye" in an attempt to mimic the tone of the King James Version of the Bible .

In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet.

My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.

> 5 March 1935 Dear Dr. Muhlschlegel,
>
> The Guardian has received and carefully considered your letter of the 24th of February last, and wishes me to thank you for it.
>
> **With reference to your questions concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book, in view of the fact that all these versions, both English and Russian, are not authoritative and hence may misrepresent altogether the Teachings.**
>
> He would, however, suggest that your N.S.A. should appoint a Committee for the purpose of undertaking the translation of the "Aqdas" into German. This is of course a peculiarly difficult task, as some of the members of such a committee should have sufficient knowledge of the Arabic language, and in addition should be well versed in the history and teachings of Islam.
>
> The Guardian hopes, nevertheless, that with your knowledge of Arabic and German you may be able to do something truly worthwhile and substantial in this connection. Your translation, of course, will not be considered as final. But for the present it would be of a great assistance to the friends in Germany who, as you rightly suggest, have a great desire to get acquainted with the laws and precepts of the Cause as recorded in the "Aqdas".
>
> **When completed, this translation should not, the Guardian feels, be printed entirely and circulated among the believers. But only extracts of it should, with the approval of your N.S.A., be**

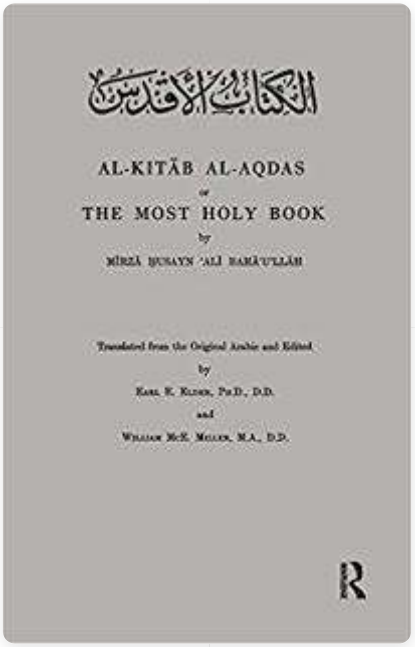
brought to the attention of the friends until such time as the publication of the whole book would be deemed advisable....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

May our beloved and vigilant Master even keep you under His wings, and inspire you to promote far and wide and in a most effective manner the manifold interests of His Faith and its ever-developing institutions.

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi



Comments

No comments.

March 5. On this date in 2013, Mas’ud Khamsi died in Lima, Peru. Elected as the inaugural Chairman of the independent NSA of Bolivia, he also served as a Continental Counsellor and as a member of the International Teaching Center.

Published on: March 04, 2026

March 5. On this date in 2013, Mas’ud Khamsi died in Lima, Peru. Elected as the inaugural Chairman of the independent NSA of Bolivia, he also served as a Continental Counsellor and as a member of the International Teaching Center.

Born in 1922 in Iran, Mas’ud Khamsi left Iran in 1957 to pioneer to South America during the Ten Year Crusade .

Mas’ud Khamsi served as an inaugural member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of La Paz, Bolivia, when it was established in 1960. He served on the joint National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay in the early 1960's, and was elected as the inaugural Chairman of the independent National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia when it was established in 1961. In 1962 he was appointed an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection for the Western Hemisphere, succeeding Mildred Mottahedeh . In 1963 he spoke at the Bahá'í World Congress during a session on pioneering.

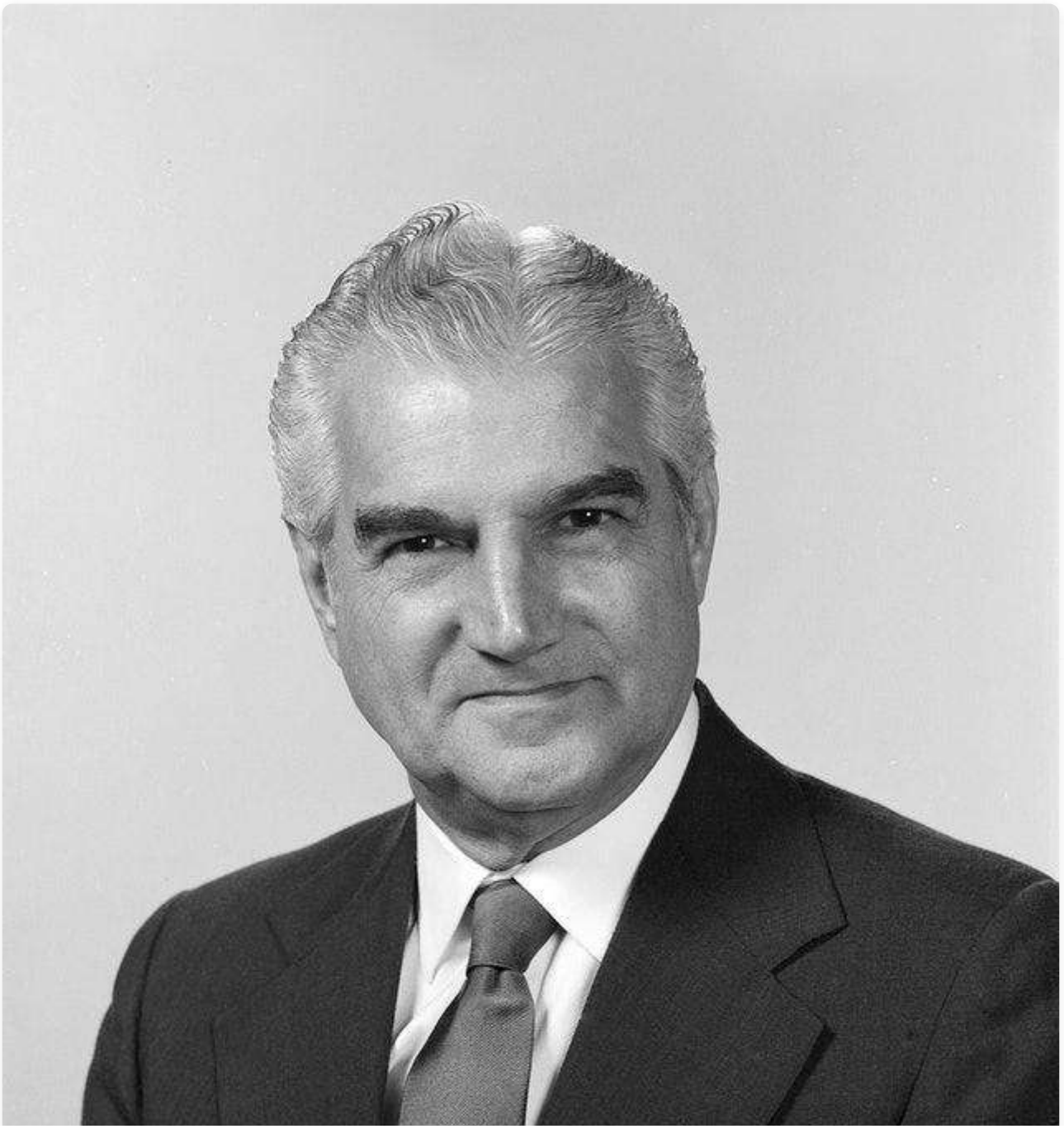
He returned to Iran at some point in the 1960's and was appointed as an inaugural Counselor for West Asia in 1968. He returned to South America in 1969, and was appointed as a Counsellor for South America. He traveled across South America extensively in his role as Counsellor, and accompanied Rúḥíyyih Khánum on the Green Light Expedition, a lengthy teaching tour of South America undertaken by boat in 1975. He was appointed the Trustee of the Continental Funds of South America in 1976, in addition to continuing to serve as Counsellor.

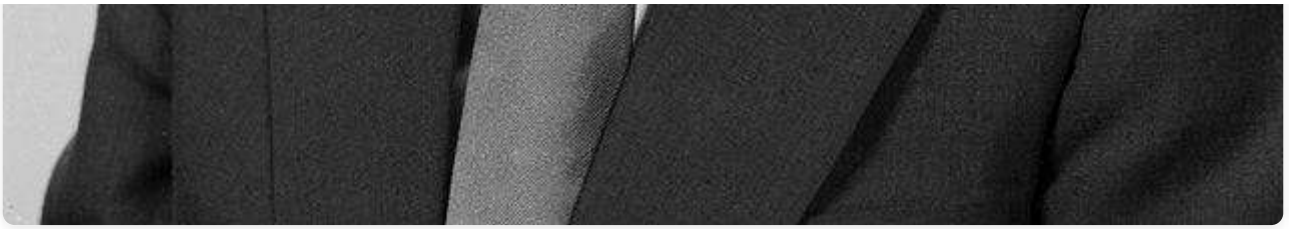
In 1962, in his role as an Auxiliary Board Member, Mas’ud Khamsi was sent to Chile along with Abu'l-Qásim Faizi in order to investigate (also mentioned here) "members

of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chile, residing in Loncoche, Fabienne. Guillon and Sr. Pallés, [who] have become Covenant-breakers , supporting the false claims of Mason Remey ."

In 1983 Mas'ud Khamsi was appointed to the International Teaching Centre for a five year term. In 1985 he, and Ruth Pringle, accompanied Rúḥíyyih Khánum to a meeting with Panama's Minister of Government and Minister of Justice to discuss the construction of a radio station by the countr's National Spiritual Assembly. He was reappointed to the ITC for a second five year term in 1988, and retired from the body in 1993.

On March 5, 2013, Mas'ud Khamsi died in Lima, Peru.





Comments

No comments.

March 5. On this date in 1985, Lloyd G. Gardner died in Bolivia. He was a Canadian Bahá'í who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada for twenty years, for a time as Chairman, and also as a Continental Counsellor for the Americas.

Published on: March 04, 2026

March 5. On this date in 1985, Lloyd G. Gardner died in Bolivia. He was a Canadian Bahá'í who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada for twenty years, for a time as Chairman, and also as a Continental Counsellor for the Americas.

Lloyd G. Gardner was born in Toronto on March 5, 1915 as the youngest of four children. His father was Ernest, a jeweller. Lloyd followed his father into the jewelling business when he was fourteen, specializing in diamond setting. He played tennis at a high level, and discovered the Faith in 1937 at a camp he attended with his tennis partner in Ontario. The camp owner was a Bahá'í who put them in touch with the Toronto Bahá'í community, which included Howard Colby Ives and Mabel Ives at the time. He became a Bahá'í in 1938, and considered Mabel Ives his spiritual mother.

Lloyd was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ontario in 1938, and assisted in organizing the first Canadian Bahá'í Summer School held at Rice Lake in Ontario the same year. At the opening of WWII Lloyd was conscripted for military service, he request non-combatant duty and trained as a shipboard medic. He was stationed in Halifax for most of the war, and helped establish the Local Spiritual Assembly of Halifax. In 1945 he was stationed in St. John's, Newfoundland, and he opened the territory to the Faith, holding a public talk on the Faith. After the war he returned to Toronto, where he was re-elected to the Local Assembly, and appointed to the National Youth Teaching Committee.

In 1948 Lloyd was elected to the first independent National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, and he served on the body for the next twenty years. In 1949 he married Helen Smith, a fellow Canadian Bahá'í, and they pioneered to North York, Ontario,

living there until pioneering to Oshawa in 1951, where their children Nancy and David were born. In 1954 Lloyd read a reading at the Memorial for Dorothy Baker at the House of Worship in Illinois, representing the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly. In 1956 Lloyd spoke at the Dedication of the National Haziratu'l-Quds of Canada in Toronto. In 1958 Lloyd spoke at the Dedication of a Temple Site at North York, Ontario, which was to be the site of a second House of Worship in America, although it has not yet been constructed. In 1963 he attended the first International Convention in Haifa and acted as a teller for the election of the first Universal House of Justice.

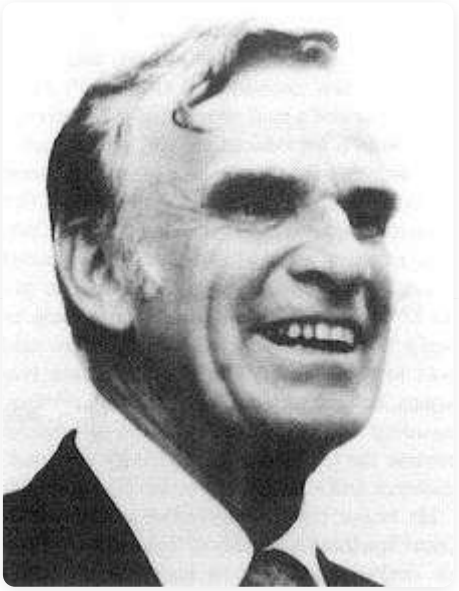
Lloyd was appointed as an inaugural Continental Counsellor for North America in 1968 for an indefinite term by the Universal House of Justice, stepping down from the Canadian National Assembly to serve in the role. In June 1969 he attended a Deepening Conference held by the Continental Board of Counsellors held in Halifax. In July 1970 he served on the Faculty of the Juneau Summer School in Alaska. In 1971 he attended the North Atlantic Oceanic Conference held in Reykjavik, Iceland. In 1972 he attended the United States National Convention. In 1973 he attended the Canadian National Convention. In September 1973 he attended a National Bahá'í Conference held in St. Louis which was attended by 10,000, making it the largest Convention held. In late August and early September 1975 Lloyd participated in a week of proclamation and deepening activities held to commemorate the Anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's 1912 visit to Canada. In 1978 Lloyd attended the first National Convention of the Bahamas. At the close of 1978 and beginning of 1979 Lloyd helped maintain momentum in a vast teaching campaign in Canada, which led to the formation of twenty-three Local Spiritual Assemblies.

In 1980 the Universal House of Justice merged the Continental Boards for North, Central, and South America into the Continental Board for the Americas, and introduced five year terms for Counsellors. Lloyd was appointed to the new body, and appointed as Trustee of the Continental Fund. In 1982 he visited Guyana, and spoke at a meeting in Georgetown. In September 1982 he spoke at an International Conference held in the Olympic Velodrome in Montreal, giving a report on the progress of the Seven Year Plan . In 1983 he attended the Canadian National Convention. In June 1983 he visited Holsteinsborg, a settlement north of the Artic Circle, for the Greenland Bahá'í Summer School. In 1984 he spoke at the

International Bahá'í Youth Conference held in Canada. In November 1984 he participated in the Conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies held in Ottawa.

Lloyd died in Bolivia on March 5, 1985, shortly after a teaching trip to St. Lucia and Barbados, and a meeting of the Counsellors of the Americas in Bolivia. The Universal House of Justice issued the following statement:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING ESTEEMED LLOYD GARDNER STALWART DEFENDER INTERESTS FAITH AMERICAS. HIS DISTINGUISHED LONGTIME SERVICE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CANADA AND MEMBERSHIP BOARD COUNSELLORS AMERICAS SINCE INCEPTION MARKED BY INDEFATIGABLE LABORS ALL ASPECTS TEACHING WORK AND COMMUNITY LIFE NOTABLY YOUTH ACTIVITIES. HIS STERLING CHARACTER HIGH INTEGRITY WARMHEARTED NATURE TOTAL DEDICATION FAITH WORTHY EMULATION. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS LUMINOUS SPIRIT ABHA KINGDOM AND SOLACE HIS SORROWING FAMILY. ADVISING ALL COMMUNITIES AMERICAS OFFER PRAYERS IN HIS NAME. REQUESTING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING TEMPLE WILMETTE



Comments

No comments.

March 5. On this date in 2008, Mahvash Sabet was arrested. She is one of the Yaran, the ad hoc administrative structure established in Iran after that country banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Published on: March 04, 2026

March 5. On this date in 2008, Mahvash Sabet was born. She is one of the Yaran , the ad hoc administrative structure established in Iran after that country banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order .

Born Mahvash Shahriyari on February 4, 1953 in Ardestan, Mahvash Sabet moved to Tehran when she was in the fifth grade. In university, she studied psychology, obtaining a bachelor's degree.

She began her professional career as a teacher and also worked as a principal at several schools. In her professional role, she also collaborated with the National Literacy Committee of Iran. After the Islamic revolution, however, she was fired from her job and blocked from working in public education.

After her termination from public education, she became director of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, where she also has taught psychology and management.

She married Siyvash Sabet on May 21, 1973. They have a son, Foroud Sabet, and a daughter, Negar Sabet, both born in Hamadan.

While all of the other Yaran were arrested at their homes in Tehran on May 14, 2008, Mahvash Sabet was arrested in Mashhad on March 5, 2008, where she had been summoned by the Ministry of Intelligence.

Sabet was released from Evin prison on September 18, 2017.

While in prison, Sabet wrote a number of poems. These were eventually adapted by Bahiyyih Nakhjavani from translations into English from the original Persian

completed by Violette and Ali Nakhjavani. These English adaptations were published by George Ronald in 2013.

On October 10, 2017, Mahvash Sabet was named 2017 International Writer of Courage by PEN International and co-winner of the annual Pinter Prize.

Comments

No comments.

March 6. On this date in 1937, a letter written for Shoghi Effendi stated "Concerning the prayer for difficulty revealed by the Bab: He wishes me to inform you that it is not accompanied by any instructions for its recital."

Published on: March 05, 2026

March 6. On this date in 1937, a letter written for Shoghi Effendi stated "Concerning the prayer for difficulty revealed by the Bab: He wishes me to inform you that it is not accompanied by any instructions for its recital."

1517. There Are No Special Instructions for Repeating Prayers of the Bab

"Concerning the prayer for difficulty revealed by the Bab: He wishes me to inform you that it is not accompanied by any instructions for its recital. **(1)** "

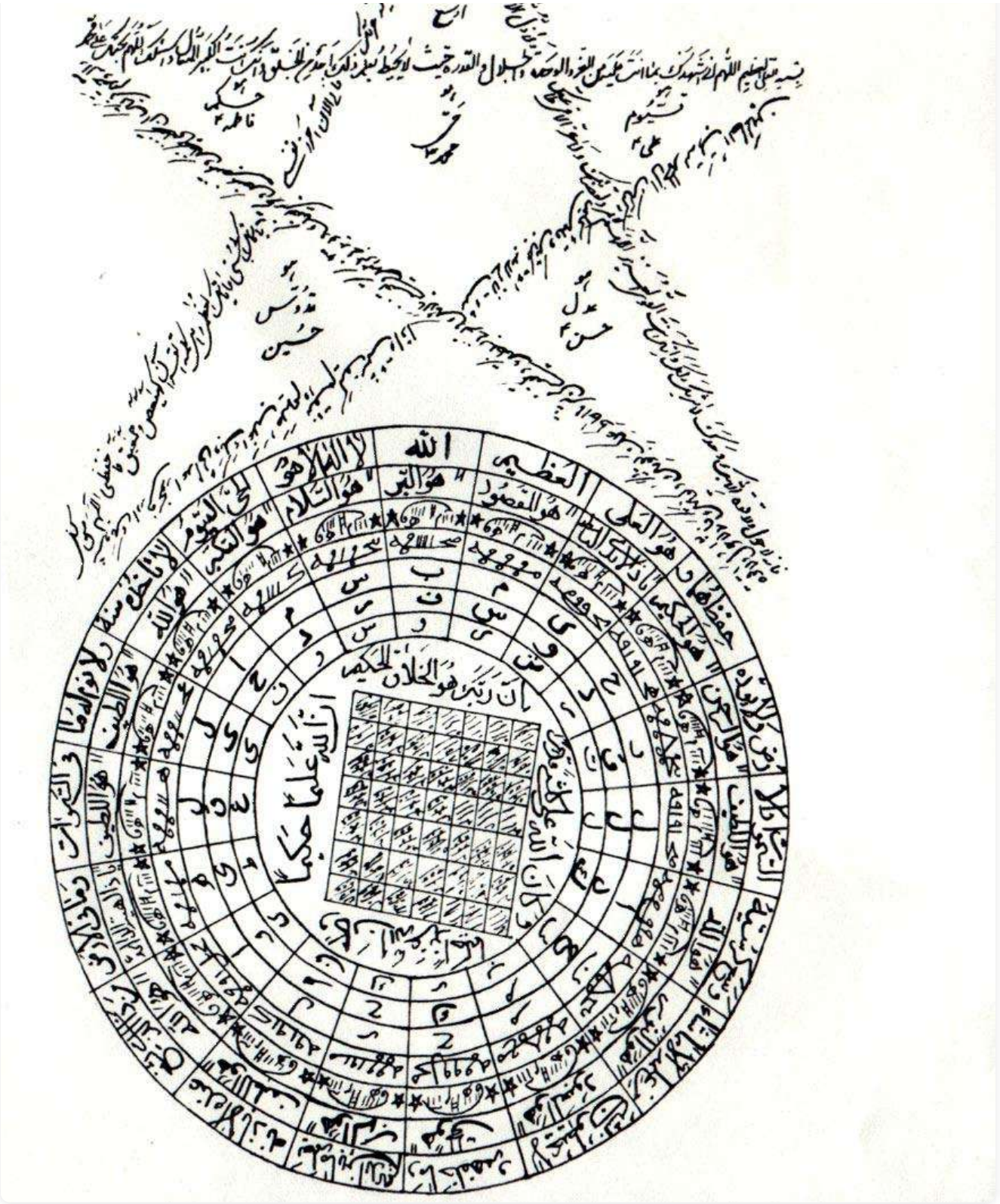
(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 6, 1937)

"Regarding your questions: The Guardian feels it is not necessary to repeat the Bab's prayer so many times. **(2)** "

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, September 30, 1950)

(1) Written in response to a question as to how often this prayer should be repeated to produce the greatest results.

(2) Written in response to a question about the repetition 114 times in the morning for 19 days of the prayer of the Bab, 'Say! God sufficeth all things above all things...' (See also: No. 1528)



Comments

No comments.

March 6. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Canada that "Iranian Bahá'ís that while they should not cut themselves off from their Muslim relatives and friends...they should not normally seek out Iranian Muslims in order to initiate friendly contacts with them or teach them the Faith."

Published on: March 05, 2026

March 6. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Canada that "Iranian Bahá'ís that while they should not cut themselves off from their Muslim relatives and friends...they should not normally seek out Iranian Muslims in order to initiate friendly contacts with them or teach them the Faith."

> 1408. Iranian Bahá'ís Need Not Avoid All Contact with Iranian Muslims--However, They Should Not Seek Them Out for Friendly Contacts nor for Teaching
>
> "The House of Justice feels that the friends, and sometimes the Bahá'í institutions, have tended to over-react to the instructions given from time to time about contacting and teaching Muslims from Iran and other places in the Middle East, and they often take to extremes the cautions given in such instructions. The friends sometimes think they should shun such people entirely or that any contact with them is considered a breach of Bahá'í law. We are asked to point out that the House of Justice has never forbidden the friends to contact Iranian Muslims, as such a general prohibition would be contrary to the spirit of the Faith. However, given the history and the current situation of the Faith in Iran, it has urged the friends in the West to act toward these people with wisdom and caution. In fact, the House of Justice has clarified the matter on various occasions by stating the following to National Spiritual Assemblies:
>
> 'The instructions of the beloved Guardian regarding teaching orientals from

the Middle East are to be upheld, even more so at this time because of the present situation in Iran. Iranian Muslims in particular should not be sought out in order to teach them the Faith. It cannot be categorically said, however, that the friends should have no contact with Iranian Muslims. Some of the Bahá'ís have relatives who are Iranian Muslims, some have close Iranian Muslim friends who happen to reside in the West, and they should not relinquish these friendships. At the same time it should be stressed to the Iranian Bahá'ís that while they should not cut themselves off from their Muslim relatives and friends--a step which could create animosity and turn them against the Faith--they should not normally seek out Iranian Muslims in order to initiate friendly contacts with them or teach them the Faith.'"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, March 6, 1983)

Comments

No comments.

March 6. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "If you persevere and make it plain to the mother that you will not marry her daughter without her consent, it is quite possible she will become impressed by your devotion to your Faith, and give her permission. In any case, your Bahá'í duty ..."

Published on: March 05, 2026

March 6. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual member , stating about the Bahá'í requirement to have the bride and groom's parents' consent prior to marriage, "If you persevere and make it plain to the mother that you will not marry her daughter without her consent, it is quite possible she will become impressed by your devotion to your Faith, and give her permission. In any case, your Bahá'í duty in the matter is quite clear."

> If you persevere and make it plain to the mother that you will not marry her daughter without her consent, it is quite possible she will become impressed by your devotion to your Faith, and give her permission. In any case, your Bahá'í duty in the matter is quite clear.
>
> 6 March 1955 to an individual believer.

The requirement of the consent of all four parents is based on the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá...

> From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh
>
> [65] It hath been laid down in the Bayan that marriage is dependent upon the consent of both parties. Desiring to establish love, unity and harmony amidst Our servants, We have conditioned it, once the couple's wish is known, upon the permission of their parents, lest enmity and rancour should arise amongst them. And in this We have yet other purposes. Thus hath Our commandment been ordained.

Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 42

> Marriage is conditioned on the consent of both parties and their parents, whether the woman be a maiden or not.
>
> Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book of Bahá'u'lláh, 1st edition. (Haifa, Bahá'í World Center, 1973), page 39 .
>
> From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
>
> In this glorious Faith marriage arrangements which are made by parents for their children while the latter are young and have not yet attained the age of maturity are not acceptable. This matter is the responsibility of the couple when they attain the age of maturity.
>
> From a Tablet--translated from the Persian

In the document linked, Marriage, Consent of Parents to , there are numerous other letters from Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice along these lines. Such as...

> About the consent of parents for marriage: this is required before and also after the man or woman is twenty-one years of age. It is also required in the event of a second marriage, after the dissolution of the first whether through death or through divorce.
>
> The parental consent is also a binding obligation irrespective of whether the parents are Bahá'ís or not, whether they are friendly or opposed to the Cause. In the event of the death of both parents, the consent of a guardian is not required.
>
> 10 October 1936 to an individual believer.

and

> The validity of a Bahá'í marriage is dependent upon the free and full consent of all four parents. The freedom of the parents in the exercise of their right is unrestricted and unconditioned. They may refuse their consent on any ground, and they are responsible for the decision to God

alone.

19 March 1938 to an individual believer.

Comments

No comments.

March 6. On this date in 1929, Ibrahim George Kheiralla died. A founder of the first American Bahá'í community along with Anton Haddad, in the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Kheiralla sided with the latter for which he was declared a Covenant-breaker.

Published on: March 05, 2026

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On November 11, 1849, Ibrahim George Kheiralla was born to a Christian family in a village on Mount Lebanon. He later studied medicine at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut.

Ibrahim George Kheiralla converted to the Bahá'í Faith while living in Egypt in 1889 when he met Hájí `Abdu'l-Karím-i-Tihrání. Kheiralla went through Europe and eventually came to the United States in late 1892 where he joined Anton Haddad, the first Bahá'í to come to America. Initially, Kheiralla settled in New York where he began teaching "Truth Seeker" classes. He visited Charles Augustus Briggs and others, as well as the Syrian community in New York.

In 1894 Kheiralla moved on to Chicago following the interest fostered by the World's Columbian Exposition's World Parliament of Religions. In Chicago he taught "Truth Seeker" classes. One of the early converts while Kheiralla was in Chicago was Thornton Chase, who had read the presentation about the Bahá'ís at the Exposition, and is generally considered the first Bahá'í convert in the West to have remained in the religion. Other individuals had converted, but none remained members of the religion.

Another to join the religion from Kheiralla's early classes was Howard MacNutt, who

would later compile *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* , a prominent collection of the addresses of `Abdu'l-Bahá during his journeys in America. Both men were designated as "Disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" and "Heralds of the Covenant" by Shoghi Effendi.

Another student of the classes and Disciple was Lua Getsinger , designated as the "mother teacher of the West".

Another who "passed" the class and joined the religion was the maverick Honoré Jackson . Kheiralla moved once again, to Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 1895, where a large Bahá'í community soon developed.

Because of his success promulgating the Bahá'í Faith in North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá titled Kheiralla "Bahá's Peter," "the Second Columbus" and "Conqueror of America." 'Abdu'l-Bahá would write a Tablet to Ibráhím George Kheiralla.

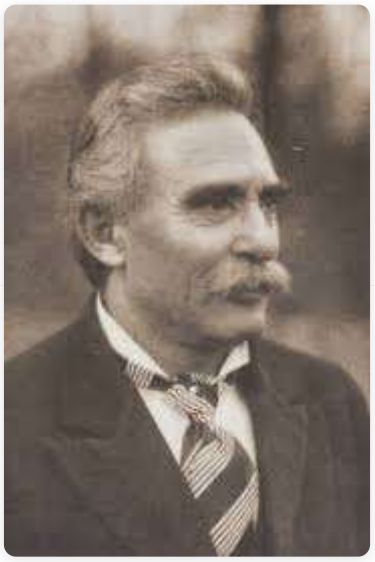
On December 10, 1898, the first Western pilgrims arrived in ‘Akká. Led by Ibrahim George Kheiralla , the group included Phoebe Hearst , Lua Getsinger , May Maxwell , and Robert Turner .

In ‘Akká, they witnessed first hand the conflict between `Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers. Upon his return to America in 1899, Kheiralla authored a book, *Beha'u'llah* , wherein he states his belief that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in rank to his brothers Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí , Díyá'u'lláh, and Badi'u'lláh. Early after the return to America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent, first, Anton Haddad with a letter contesting the definition of leadership, then Khieralla's initial teacher of the religion, 'Abdu’l-Karím-i-Tihrání, to confront him.

The conflict made the newspapers. Ultimately, in the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí , Kheiralla sided with the latter for which he was declared a Covenant-breaker.

Kheiralla would go on to form the "Society of Behaists," which would later be led by Shua Ullah Behai and eventually become defunct. Kheiralla had three children, two daughters who were named Nabeeha and Labiba, and a son named George Ibrahim Kheirallah who converted Islam in the 1930s, becoming active in the Islamic Society of New York, and translated and published some poems of Khalil Gibran.

Ibrahim George Kheiralla died on March 6, 1929.



Comments

No comments.

March 7. On this date in 1993, Rowland Estall died in Duncan, British Columbia. He served on the NSA of Canada for twenty-five years, as an Auxiliary Board member for Canada for nine years and as a Continental Counselor for Central America for seven years. He had a successful career in insurance.

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 7. On this date in 1993, Rowland Estall died in Duncan, British Columbia. He served on the NSA of Canada for twenty-five years, as an Auxiliary Board member for Canada for nine years and as a Continental Counselor for Central America for seven years. He had a successful career in insurance.

Rowland Estall was born in London, England, on April 27, 1906, as the middle child in a family of seven. His father was a lay reader of the Church of England. In 1920 the family moved to Montreal, Canada.

Rowland joined the Merchant Marine when he was 18 and served as a wireless operator for two years. He studied religion during this time. In 1926 he was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Mary Maxwell , the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum , at a meeting of the Canadian Fellowship of Youth for Peace, and he declared the following year and formed a Bahá'í youth group with Maxwell and Emeric Sala which wrote to Shoghi Effendi. With the assistance of Elizabeth Greenleaf this group became the first American youth group to systematically study the writings. Rowland met Stella Delanti , an actress, through the youth group and married her. In 1928 Rowland and Emeric were elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Montreal.

Rowland enrolled to study journalism, but instead began working in the field of insurance and pensions for the Sun Life Assurance Company, having been introduced through his younger brother who worked for the company. The job involved extensive travel and he used this opportunity to teach the Faith throughout Canada. In 1933 he

was appointed to a Contacts Committee dedicated to teaching the Faith by correspondence by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada. He was responsible for all of Canada.

In 1934 Rowland and Stella moved to Saint-Lambert in order to establish the Faith there, unfortunately their marriage ended shortly afterwards. In 1935 Rowland secured a transfer to Vancouver from the Sun Life Company, the new position also involved extensive travel and allowed him to give talks on the Faith in Calgary, Regina, Toronto, Montreal, St. Lambert, Vancouver and West Vancouver in the late 1930's. While living in Vancouver he was appointed as Regional Teaching Representative by the National Assembly of the US and Canada, helped establish a Vancouver youth group and incorporate the Vancouver Local Assembly, and served on the Regional Teaching Committee for Oregon, Washington, Idaho and British Columbia. In January, 1938, Rowland visited the United States and gave a talk on World Order in Everett, Washington, assisting early teaching efforts there.

He aimed to pioneer to Guatemala in the late 1930's but was advised to pioneer within Canada by Shoghi Effendi and he resigned from Sun Life and moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in May 1939. He worked for Emeric Sala's business before securing a position with the insurance company Great West Life. By July 1939 Rowland was teaching a regular study group in Winnipeg which was later enlarged through collaboration with Ernest Court, President of the Phoenix Club which was an adult education group. On October 29, 1939, he gave a talk to the combined Unitarian and Federated Icelandic Churches on the Bahá'í concept of a New World Order in Winnipeg. In 1940 he presented a comprehensive introduction to the Faith to over 300 people across nine meetings in Winnipeg.

In 1941 Shoghi Effendi tasked the North American Bahá'ís with establishing at least one Spiritual Assembly in every State and Province which prompted several Regional Bahá'í Conferences. Rowland assisted in organizing the Conference for the Eastern Provinces of Canada held in Montreal from June 28 to July 2 1941. He conducted a daily Teaching Forum at the conference, speaking at it himself on what the Post-War Teaching Objectives of the community were. Rowland also attended the Regional Conference for Ontario in Toronto in August, 1941, and conducted a Teaching Forum.

Following these Conferences Rowland concentrated on establishing the Faith in the Prairie Provinces of Canada and he was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee of Manitoba & Saskatchewan in 1942. In 1943 he was noted for his intensive teaching in virgin areas, and he had become Regional Secretary for Western Canada.

In 1943 Rowland was appointed to the Committee responsible for preparing celebrations of the Bahá'í Centennial in 1944, excluding the dedication in the Temple. He spoke at the Centenary meeting for the Public at Temple Foundation Hall on May 23, 1944, and his address was published in World Order Magazine under the title America and the Most Great Peace. In October 1944 he gave a talk on the Faith to members of the Edmonton Muslim community. In December 1946 Rowland was appointed to Canada's first National Teaching Committee. In 1947 Rowland remarried to Yvonne Frank, a social worker, in Winnipeg and they moved to Montreal in 1948. They had three children and remained together until 1971 for their sake. Rowland attributed the failure of the marriage to his travelling for work and the Faith.

Rowland was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Canada in April 1948. By 1951 he was Vice-Chair of the Assembly. In August 1952 he taught at the Ontario Summer School. He expressed his willingness to pioneer outside of Canada for the Faith in a letter to Shoghi Effendi in March 1954, but in May 1954 he received a reply advising him to remain in Canada:

> "He will be very happy to see you in the pioneer field. However, he considers that at the present time the national work in Canada has been weakened through Freddie's death, Rosemary and Emeric Sala's departure and that of John Robarts and his family. In view of this, he advises you to continue living where you are and helping with the national work, which, if weakened to too great an extent through the departure of all the most active members of the National Assembly, will suffer spiritually, and even endanger, he fears, the success of their part of the Ten Year Plan . Perhaps, at a later date, when the national work is in a stronger position, it will be possible for you to enter the pioneering field."

In June 1954 Rowland was appointed as the first, and at the time only, Auxiliary

Board member for Canada and served in the position until 1963. He continued to also serve on the National Assembly after his appointment. In July 1954 he travelled across Canada visiting Bahá'ís in St. John's, Sydney, the Magdalen Islands, Shediac, Charlottetown and Prince Edward Island. By February 1955 he was regularly visiting Quebec to teach the Faith. In October 1955 he visited Bahá'í communities in Ontario and spoke at the Central ontario Teaching Conference in Ingersoll. In September 1956 Rowland delivered the Dedication Address at the Dedication of the Haziratu'l-Quds of Canada in Toronto.

Following the death of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 the Hands of the Cause issued a directive that there should be two Auxiliary Boards, one for teaching the Faith, and the other for protecting it from Covenant-breakers. Rowland was reappointed as an Auxiliary Board member for Protection. In 1963 Rowland was replaced by Frederick Graham as Auxiliary Board member, as it was decided that those serving as Auxiliary Board members and National Spiritual Assembly members could only serve in one capacity and Rowland continued to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada. In 1963 Rowland attended the election of the first Universal House of Justice, casting a vote for the body as a delegate for Canada. He gave a talk at the World Congress in London the same year. In 1965 he recited a prayer at the funeral of Leroy Ioas.

Rowland retired from his job in 1971. In September 1971 he attended the North Atlantic Oceanic Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, which was one of fifteen Conferences called by the Universal House of Justice for consultation on the goals of the Nine Year Plan. He opened the Conference by welcoming the attendees as he was representing the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada which was hosting the event.

He toured Central America and the Caribbean for six months following the Conference, attending the Convention at which the National Spiritual Assembly of the Windward Islands was established in April 1972. Later in 1972 he returned to Canada and assisted Jenabe Caldwell in a mass teaching campaign in Quebec. In December 1972 Rowland remarried to Vivian Taylor, an American Bahá'í who he had first met in 1965 at Green Acre and begun a relationship with at the Windward Islands Convention earlier that year, and they pioneered to Martinique in January 1973 where

they devoted themselves to re-establishing Martiniques six Local Spiritual Assemblies, succeeding by Ridvan that year.

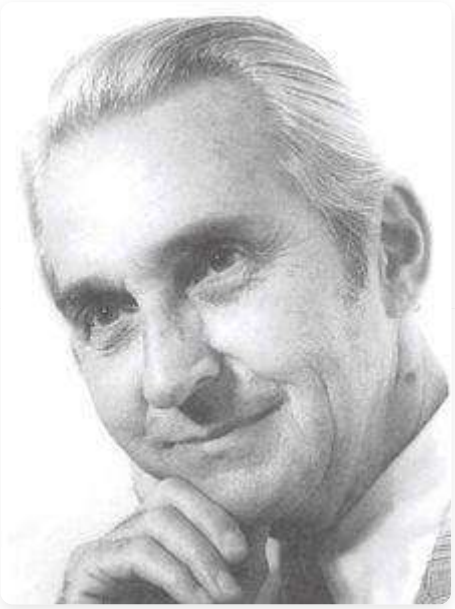
In June 1973 Rowland was appointed as a Continental Counselor for Central America for an indefinite term. In February 1974 he taught at a Bahá'í institute in Blackman Eddy, Belize. In 1975 he taught classes at an experimental three month deepening institute in Panama. In 1977 he represented the Continental Board at the first National Convention of the French Antilles in Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe. In 1978 he consulted with the National Teaching Committee and National Assembly of the Barbados and Windward Islands on their goals for the Five Year Plan and toured the local communities of the region offering suggestions on how individuals could assist in achieving the goals.

In 1980 the Continental Board for Central America was merged with the Boards for North and South America and Rowlands service as Counselor ended. As Counselor he had helped pave the way for the establishment National Assemblies for the French Antilles, the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe. He moved to Toronto, Canada, in 1981 for his health and economic situation on the advice of the Universal House of Justice. Vivian died due to cancer in September 1985.

In 1989 Rowland introduced Joan Dunne, a nurse, to the Faith while hospitalized and they married in 1992. They moved to Barbados for three months, then to Vancouver Island back in Canada where Rowland died on March 7, 1993. The Universal House of Justice conveyed the following message after his death:

> "We are distressed to learn of the passing of Rowland Estall who rendered distinguished services to the Faith for over six decades, including periods of service as Continental Counsellor, Auxiliary Board member, and as member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada for no less than 25 years. His highly meritorious contributions to the establishment of the Cause also included international pioneering to Martinique as well as homefront pioneering to a number of Canadian cities. He will long be remembered for the outstanding part he played in the initial growth of the Canadian Baha'i community and in the development of its international

role. Prayers will be offered in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul. Kindly convey our condolences to his wife and children in this time of their bereavement."



Comments

No comments.

March 7. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the reference to Ishmael is correct, although it disagrees with the text of the Bible. The Qur'án too corroborates this statement of Bahá'u'lláh, and as this book is more authentic than the Bible, it is obvious that it should be given …."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 7. On this date in 1938, a letter was addressed to an individual believer on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stating that "the reference to Ishmael is correct, although it disagrees with the text of the Bible. **The Qur'án too corroborates this statement of Bahá'u'lláh, and as this book is more authentic than the Bible, it is obvious that it should be given precedence over the Jewish and Christian Holy Scriptures, which cannot be considered as being wholly authentic.** "

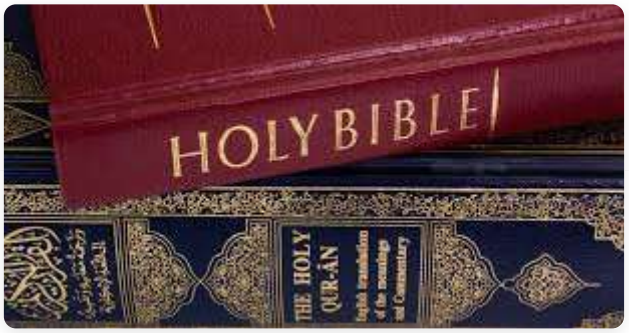
This statement is corroborated by other letters by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice.

For example...

> The Bahá'ís believe what is in the Bible to be true in substance. This does not mean that every word recorded in that Book is to be taken literally and treated as the authentic saying of a Prophet. A striking example is given in the account of the sacrifice which Abraham was called upon to make. The Guardian of the Faith confirms that the record in the Qur'an and the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, namely that it was Ishmael, and not Isaac as stated in the Old Testament, whom Abraham was to sacrifice, is to be upheld. In one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to this discrepancy, and explains that, from a spiritual point of view, it is irrelevant which son was involved. The essential part of the story is that Abraham was willing to obey God's command to sacrifice His son. Thus, although the account in the Torah is inaccurate in detail, it is true in substance....

...The Bahá'ís believe that God's Revelation is under His care and protection and that the essence, or essential elements, of what His Manifestations intended to convey has been recorded and preserved in Their Holy Books. However, as the sayings of the ancient Prophets were written down some time later, we cannot categorically state, as we do in the case of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, that the words and phrases attributed to Them are Their exact words

(9 August 1984 to an individual believer)



Comments

No comments.

March 7. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Thus in the Ten Year Crusade, we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel...to not only spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, but in this period of the Ten Year Crusade, are actually engaged in the fulfilment of prophecy."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 7. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Thus in the Ten Year Crusade , we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, because with the completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963 we will have established the Faith in every part of the globe. What a great privilege it is that individuals such as we are, have an opportunity to not only spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, but in this period of the Ten Year Crusade , are actually engaged in the fulfilment of prophecy."

> Furthermore, the Guardian in a letter dated 7 March 1955 written on his behalf to an individual believer states:
>
> > Thus in the Ten Year Crusade , we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel , because with the completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963 we will have established the Faith in every part of the globe.
> >
> > What a great privilege it is that individuals such as we are, have an opportunity to not only spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, but in this period of the Ten Year Crusade , are actually engaged in the fulfilment of prophecy .

Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "Visit ye especially the city of Bahia, on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because in the past years this city was christened with the name, BAHIA, there is no doubt that it has been through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "Visit ye especially the city of Bahia, on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because in the past years this city was christened with the name, BAHIA, there is no doubt that it has been through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."

On March 8 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada*, which is the 14th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in Ismá'íl Áqá's room at the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> He is God!
>
> O ye heavenly souls, sons and daughters of the Kingdom:

GOD says in the Qur'án: "Take ye hold of the Cord of God, all of you, and become ye not disunited." 1

In the contingent world there are many collective centers which are conducive to association and unity between the children of men. For example, patriotism is a collective center; nationalism is a collective center; identity of interests is a collective center; political alliance is a collective center; the union of ideals is a collective center, and the prosperity of the world of humanity is dependent upon the organization and promotion of the collective centers. Nevertheless, all the above institutions are, in reality, the matter and not the substance, accidental and not eternal—temporary and not everlasting. With the appearance of great revolutions and upheavals, all these collective centers are swept away. **But the Collective Center of the Kingdom , embodying the institutions and divine teachings, is the eternal Collective Center.** It establishes relationship between the East and the West, organizes the oneness of the world of humanity, and destroys the foundation of differences. It overcomes and includes all the other collective centers. Like unto the ray of the sun, it dispels entirely the darkness encompassing all the regions, bestows ideal life, and causes the effulgence of divine illumination. Through the breaths of the Holy Spirit it performs miracles; the Orient and the Occident embrace each other, the North and South become intimates and associates, conflicting and contending opinions disappear, antagonistic aims are brushed aside, the law of the struggle for existence is abrogated, and the canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity is raised on the apex of the globe, casting its shade over all the races of men. Consequently, the real Collective Center is the body of the divine teachings, which include all the degrees and embrace all the universal relations and necessary laws of humanity.

Consider! The people of the East and the West were in the utmost strangeness. Now to what a high degree they are acquainted with each other and united together! **How far are the inhabitants of Persia from the remotest countries of America! And now observe how**

great has been the influence of the heavenly power, for the distance of thousands of miles has become identical with one step! How various nations that have had no relations or similarity with each other are now united and agreed through this divine potency! Indeed to God belongs power in the past and in the future! And verily God is powerful over all things!

Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men.

Therefore, the believers of God throughout all the republics of America, through the divine power, must become the cause of the promotion of heavenly teachings and the establishment of the oneness of humanity. Every one of the important souls must arise, blowing over all parts of America the breath of life, conferring upon the people a new spirit, baptizing them with the fire of the love of God, the water of life, and the breaths of the Holy Spirit so that the second birth may become 104 realized. For it is written in the Gospel: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” 2

Therefore, **O ye believers of God in the United States and Canada! Select ye important personages, or else they by themselves,**

becoming severed from rest and composure of the world, may arise and travel throughout Alaska, the republic of Mexico, and south of Mexico in the Central American republics, such as Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Belize; and through the great South American republics, such as Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, French Guiana, Dutch Guiana, British Guiana, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile; also in the group of the West Indies islands, such as Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Santo Domingo, and the group of islands of the Lesser Antilles, the Islands of Bahama and the Islands of Bermuda; likewise to the islands to the east, west and north of South America, such as Trinidad, Falkland Islands, Galapagòs Islands, Juan Fernandez and Tobago. Visit ye especially the city of Bahia , on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because in the past years this city was christened with the name, BAHIA , there is no doubt that it has been through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, the believers of God must display the utmost effort, upraise the divine melody throughout those regions, promulgate the heavenly teachings and waft over all the spirit of eternal life, so that those republics may become so illumined with the splendors and the effulgences of the Sun of Reality that they may become the objects of the praise and commendation of all other countries. Likewise, ye must give great attention to the Republic of **Panama** , for in that point the Occident and the Orient find each other united through the Panama Canal, and it is also situated between the two great oceans. That place will become very important in the future. The teachings, once established there, will unite the East and the West, the North and the South.

Hence the intention must be purified, the effort ennobled and exalted, so that you may establish affinity between the hearts of the world of humanity. This glorious aim will not become realized save through the promotion of divine teachings which are the foundations of the holy religions.

Consider how the religions of God served the world of humanity! How the religion of Torah became conducive to the glory and honor and progress of the Israelitish nation! How the breaths of the Holy Spirit of His Holiness Christ created affinity and unity between divergent communities and quarreling families! How the sacred power of His Holiness Muḥammad became the means of uniting and harmonizing the contentious tribes and the different clans of Peninsular Arabia—to such an extent that one thousand tribes were welded into one tribe; strife and discord were done away with; all of them unitedly and with one accord strove in advancing the cause of culture and civilization, and thus were freed from the lowest degree of degradation, soaring toward the height of everlasting glory! Is it possible to find a greater Collective Center in the phenomenal world than this? In comparison to this divine Collective Center, the national collective center, the patriotic collective center, the political collective center and the cultural and intellectual collective center are like child's play!

Now strive ye that the Collective Center of the sacred religions—for the inculcation of which all the Prophets were manifested and which is no other than the spirit of the divine teachings—be spread in all parts of America, so that each one of you may shine forth from the horizon of reality like unto the morning star, divine illumination may overcome the darkness of nature, and the world of humanity may become enlightened. This is the most great work! Should you become confirmed therein, this world will become another world, the surface of the earth will become the delectable paradise, and eternal Institutions be founded.

Let whosoever travels to different parts to teach, peruse over mountain, desert, land and sea this supplication:

> O GOD! O God! Thou seest my weakness, lowliness and humility before Thy creatures; nevertheless, I have trusted in Thee and have arisen in the promotion of Thy teachings among Thy strong servants, relying on Thy power and might.
>
> O Lord! I am a broken-winged bird and desire to soar in Thy

limitless space. How is it possible for me to do this save through Thy providence and grace, Thy confirmation and assistance.

O Lord! Have pity on my weakness, and strengthen me with Thy power. O Lord! Have pity on my impotence, and assist me with Thy might and majesty.

O Lord! Should the breath of the Holy Spirit confirm the weakest of creatures, he would attain all to which he aspireth and would possess anything he desireth. Indeed, Thou hast assisted Thy servants in the past and, though they were the weakest of Thy creatures, the lowliest of Thy servants and the most insignificant of those who lived upon the earth, through Thy sanction and potency they took precedence over the most glorious of Thy people and the most noble of mankind. Whereas formerly they were as moths, they became as royal falcons, and whereas before they were as brooks, they became as seas, through Thy bestowal and Thy mercy. They became, through Thy most great favor, stars shining on the horizon of guidance, birds singing in the rose gardens of immortality, lions roaring in the forests of knowledge and wisdom, and whales swimming in the oceans of life.

Verily, Thou art the Clement, the Powerful, the Mighty, and the Most Merciful of the merciful.

1. Qur'án 3:103.
2. John 3:6.

Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing the practice of masturbation noting "no sexual act can be considered lawful unless performed between lawfully married persons. Outside of marital life there can be no lawful ..."

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March 8. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer about the practice of masturbation noting "no sexual act can be considered lawful unless performed between lawfully married persons. Outside of marital life there can be no lawful or healthy use of the sex impulse... **Masturbation is clearly not a proper use of the sex instinct, as this is understood in the Faith.** "

> "We have found in the Holy Writings no explicit references to masturbation , but there are a number of principles and teachings which can guide a Bahá'í to the correct attitude towards it. In a letter to an individual believer, written by the Guardian's secretary on his behalf, it is pointed out that:
>
> 'The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the value of the sex impulse, but condemns its illegitimate and improper expressions such as free love, companionate marriage and others, all of which it considers positively harmful to man and to the society in which he lives. The proper use of the sex instinct is the natural right of every individual, and it is precisely for this very purpose that the institution of marriage has been established. The Bahá'ís do not believe in the suppression of the sex impulse but in its regulation and control.'
>
> "In response to another letter enquiring if there were any legitimate way in which a person could express the sex instinct if, for some reason, he were unable to marry or if outer circumstances such as economic factors were to

cause him to delay marriage, the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf:

'Concerning your question whether there are any legitimate forms of expression of the sex instinct outside of marriage: According to the Bahá'í Teachings **no sexual act can be considered lawful unless performed between lawfully married persons. Outside of marital life there can be no lawful or healthy use of the sex impulse.** The Bahá'í youth should, on the one hand, be taught the lesson of self-control which, when exercised, undoubtedly has a salutary effect on the development of character and of personality in general, and on the other should be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigour. Economic factors, no doubt, are often a serious hindrance to early marriage but in most cases are only an excuse, and as such should not be over stressed.'

"In another letter on the Guardian's behalf, also to an individual believer, the secretary writes:

'Amongst the many other evils afflicting society in this spiritual low water mark in history is the question of immorality, and over-emphasis of sex...'

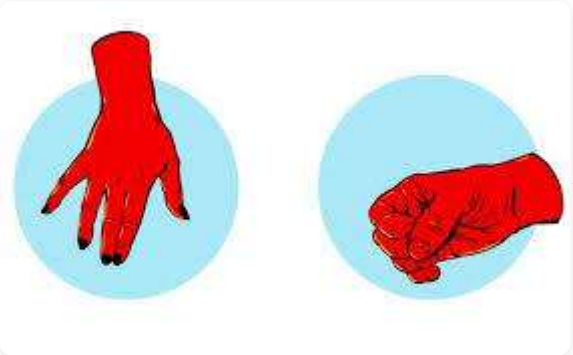
"This indicates how the whole matter of sex and the problems related to it have assumed far too great an importance in the thinking of present-day society.

" **Masturbation is clearly not a proper use of the sex instinct, as this is understood in the Faith.** Moreover it involves, as you have pointed out, mental fantasies, while Bahá'u'lláh, in the Kitab-i-Aqdas , has exhorted us not to indulge our passions and in one of His well-known Tablets Abdu'l-Bahá encourages us to keep our 'secret thoughts pure'. Of course many wayward thoughts come involuntarily to the mind and these are merely a result of weakness and are not blameworthy unless they become fixed or even worse, are expressed in improper acts. In 'The Advent of Divine Justice' , when describing the moral standards that Bahá'ís must uphold both individually and in their community life, the Guardian wrote:

'Such a chaste and holy life, with its implications of modesty, purity, temperance, decency, and clean-mindedness, involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations. It demands daily vigilance in the control of one's carnal desires and corrupt inclinations.'

"Your problem, therefore, is one against which you should continue to struggle, with determination and with the aid of prayer. You should remember, however, that it is only one of the many temptations and faults that a human being must strive to overcome during his lifetime, and you should not increase the difficulty you have by over-emphasising its importance. We suggest you try to see it within the whole spectrum of the qualities that a Bahá'í must develop in his character. Be vigilant against temptation, but do not allow it to claim too great a share of your attention. You should concentrate, rather, on the virtues that you should develop, the services you should strive to render, and, above all, on God and His attributes, and devote your energies to living a full Bahá'í life in all its many aspects."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, a copy of which was sent to the compiler with a letter dated March 8, 1981)



Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1930, Shoghi Effendi cabled Queen Marie of Romania and her daughter Ileana, who were visiting Egypt "Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit..."

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From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum 's book *The Priceless Pearl* , titled " Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania "...

> In 1930 her Majesty visited Egypt with her daughter Ileana . Shoghi Effendi, having had the unfortunate experience of indiscreet publicity during her visit to Cyprus, wired Alexandria on 19 February: "Advise Assembly in case Queen visits Egypt convey only written expression of welcome and appreciation on behalf Bahá'ís. Letter should be briefly carefully worded. No objection sending flowers. Individual communications should be strictly avoided. Inform Cairo."
>
> In the hope that at last the Queen would be able to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places in Palestine the Guardian had had Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to her grandmother, Queen Victoria , copied in fine Persian calligraphy, and illuminated in Tehran. On 21 February he cabled Tehran: "Illuminated

Tablet Queen Victoria should reach Haifa not later than March tenth on one or several pages." This was to be his gift to Her Majesty. Hearing no news of the Queen's plans once she had reached Egypt he wired to her direct on 8 March: "Her Majesty, the Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania , abroad Mayflower, Aswan. Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit His home in Haifa. Your Majesty 's acceptance to visit Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine and prison-city of 'Akka will apart from its historic significance be a source of immeasurable strength joy and hope to the silent sufferers of the Faith throughout the East. Our fondest love, prayers and best wishes for Your Majesty 's happiness and welfare."

Receiving no reply to this communication Shoghi Effendi sent another wire on 26 March to the Queen at the Hotel Semiramis in Cairo: "Fearing my former letter and telegram in which Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá joined me in extending invitation to Your Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana may have miscarried, we are pleased to express anew the pleasure it would give us all should Your Majesty find it feasible to visit Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Shrines and the prison-city of 'Akka. Deeply regret unauthorized publicity given by the Press." Two days later the Rumanian Minister in Cairo wired Shoghi Effendi: " Her Majesty regrets that not passing through Palestine she will not be able to visit you."

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter , Princess Ileana of Romania , disputes this claim :

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II , one of Samoa 's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston , who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas .

Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "the genetic engineering of fertilized human eggs is far from becoming a reality in the foreseeable future, therefore it does not feel it is propitious or necessary for it to legislate on this matter, or to take up a position about it."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 8. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the genetic engineering of fertilized human eggs is far from becoming a reality in the foreseeable future, therefore it does not feel it is propitious or necessary for it to legislate on this matter, or to take up a position about it."

> Concerning your first question, the House of Justice understands that the genetic engineering of fertilized human eggs is far from becoming a reality in the foreseeable future, therefore it does not feel it is propitious or necessary for it to legislate on this matter, or to take up a position about it. (8 March 1983, to an individual believer)

Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 2015, the UHJ wrote "interlinear editions of the Bahá'í Writings are unnecessary for Bahá'ís, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation. Those who wish to compare the translation with the Arabic or Persian text ..."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 8. On this date in 2015, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The custom of publishing interlinear editions of the Qur'án arose out of particular conditions and assumptions within Islám that do not exist in the Bahá'í Faith. Although such editions served the need for non-Arabic speakers to understand what they were reading, interlinear editions of the Bahá'í Writings are unnecessary for Bahá'ís, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation. Those who wish to compare the translation with the Arabic or Persian text can do so easily enough by referring to the relevant editions, while printing both in juxtaposition would tend to distract all other readers from their primary focus — the reading and study of the Text.

> 8 March 2015
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> Your email letter of 21 January 2015, regarding interlinear editions of Bahá'í Writings and the availability of the Computer Translation Aid (CTA) software, has been received by the Universal House of Justice, which has asked us to respond as follows.
>
> The custom of publishing interlinear editions of the Qur'án arose out of particular conditions and assumptions within Islám that do not exist in the Bahá'í Faith. Although such editions served the need for non-Arabic speakers to understand what they were reading, interlinear editions of the

Bahá'í Writings are unnecessary for Bahá'ís, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation. Those who wish to compare the translation with the Arabic or Persian text can do so easily enough by referring to the relevant editions, while printing both in juxtaposition would tend to distract all other readers from their primary focus – the reading and study of the Text.

Your suggestion regarding the benefits of an open availability of the CTA software has been noted.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 2005, Richard Thomas gave a lecture titled "African American Baha'is, Race Relations and the Development of the Baha'i Community in the United States" as part of the University of Haifa's "Lectures in Baha'i Studies" series.

Published on: March 06, 2026

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Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1950, Mariette Bolton, wife of Stanley Bolton, asked Shoghi Effendi if an "annual fixed pilgrimage should be made to the grave of Father Dunn."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 8. On this date in 1950, Mariette Bolton , wife of Stanley Bolton , asked Shoghi Effendi if an "annual fixed pilgrimage should be made to the grave of Father Dunn ."

Comments

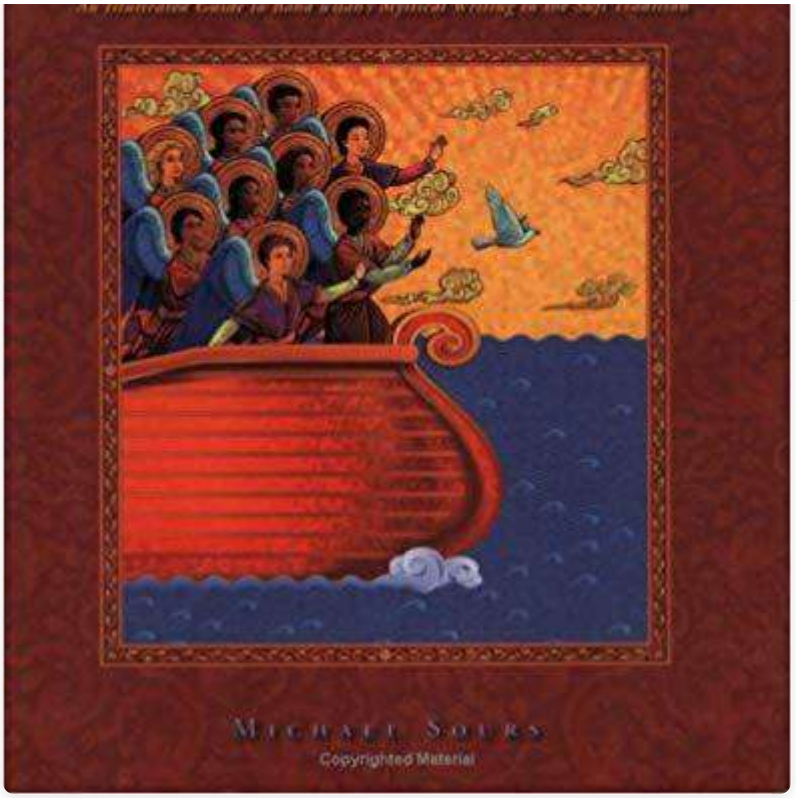
No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Tablet of the Holy Mariner was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. The Holy Mariner is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and the Ark mentioned in that Tablet is the Ark of His Cause."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 8. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Tablet of the Holy Mariner was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. The Holy Mariner is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and the Ark mentioned in that Tablet is the Ark of His Cause."

> 1609. The Tablet of the Holy Mariner
>
> "The Tablet of the Holy Mariner was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. The Holy Mariner is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and the Ark mentioned in that Tablet is the Ark of His Cause."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 8, 1936)
>
> "Concerning the Tablet of the Holy Mariner, it is one of the most significant Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh during the last days of His stay in Baghdad, and refers to the sad though momentous events which were to transpire soon after His arrival in Adrianople. Its main significance lies in the fact that in it Bahá'u'lláh clearly foreshadows the grave happenings which eventually led to the defection of Subh-i-Azal, and to the schism which the latter thought to create within the ranks of the faithful."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 10, 1934)



Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1873, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá married Munírih Khánum. By the time of Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957, all of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Munírih Khánum's children and grandchildren had been declared Covenant-Breakers.

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March 8. On this date in 1873, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá married Munírih Khánum. By the time of Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957, all of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Munírih Khánum's children and grandchildren had been declared Covenant-Breakers.

The marriage of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Munírih Khánum resulted in nine children, five of whom died in childhood: Husayn Effendi (d. 1305/1887, aged two), Mihdí (died aged two-and-a-half), Túbá, Fu'ádiyyih, and Ruhangíz.

Four daughters grew to adulthood. The oldest of these was Diyá'iyyih (d. 1951), who married Mírzá Hádí Shírází (d. 1955) in 1313/1895; their children were Shoghi Effendi, Rúhangíz, Mihrangíz, Husayn, and Riyád, who all took the surname Rabbání.

The second daughter, Túbá Khánum (1880-1959), married Mírzá Muhsin Afnán (1863-1927); their children were Rúhí (1899-1971), Thurayyá, Suhayl, and Fu'ád (d. 1943), who all took the surname Afnán.

The third daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Rúhá , married Mírzá Jalál, the son of Mírzá Muhammad Hasan, the King of Martyrs (see " Nahrí family "); their children were Maryam, Muníb, Zahrá and Hasan, who all took the surname Shahíd.

The fourth daughter, Munavvar (d. 1971), married Mírzá Ahmad, the son of Mírzá 'Abdu'r-Rahím Yazdí; they were childless.

In the 1930s and 1940s a series of marriages linked the sons of Sayyid 'Alí Afnán and Furúghiyyih Khánum, who had been supporters of Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, with the grandchildren of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As a result of these marriages, other inappropriate marriages (for example, that of Shoghi Effendi's brother Husayn to a "lowborn

Christain girl" , or refusal to break ties with Covenant-breakers in the family, Shoghi Effendi, in the 1940s and early 1950s, declared all the surviving grandchildren of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (except himself) Covenant-breakers.

Comments

No comments.

March 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada," which is the 14th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 8. On this date in 1917, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada* , which is the 14th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan* , in Ismá'íl Áqá's room at the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* . These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order . Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> He is God!
>
> O ye heavenly souls, sons and daughters of the Kingdom:
>
> GOD says in the Qur'án: "Take ye hold of the Cord of God, all of you, and become ye not disunited." 1
>
> In the contingent world there are many collective centers which are conducive to association and unity between the children of men. For example, patriotism is a collective center; nationalism is a collective center; identity of interests is a collective center; political alliance is a collective

center; the union of ideals is a collective center, and the prosperity of the world of humanity is dependent upon the organization and promotion of the collective centers. Nevertheless, all the above institutions are, in reality, the matter and not the substance, accidental and not eternal—temporary and not everlasting. With the appearance of great revolutions and upheavals, all these collective centers are swept away. **But the Collective Center of the Kingdom , embodying the institutions and divine teachings, is the eternal Collective Center.** It establishes relationship between the East and the West, organizes the oneness of the world of humanity, and destroys the foundation of differences. It overcomes and includes all the other collective centers. Like unto the ray of the sun, it dispels entirely the darkness encompassing all the regions, bestows ideal life, and causes the effulgence of divine illumination. Through the breaths of the Holy Spirit it performs miracles; the Orient and the Occident embrace each other, the North and South become intimates and associates, conflicting and contending opinions disappear, antagonistic aims are brushed aside, the law of the struggle for existence is abrogated, and the canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity is raised on the apex of the globe, casting its shade over all the races of men. Consequently, the real Collective Center is the body of the divine teachings, which include all the degrees and embrace all the universal relations and necessary laws of humanity.

Consider! The people of the East and the West were in the utmost strangeness. Now to what a high degree they are acquainted with each other and united together! **How far are the inhabitants of Persia from the remotest countries of America! And now observe how great has been the influence of the heavenly power, for the distance of thousands of miles has become identical with one step!** How various nations that have had no relations or similarity with each other are now united and agreed through this divine potency! Indeed to God belongs power in the past and in the future! And verily God is powerful over all things!

Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men.

Therefore, the believers of God throughout all the republics of America, through the divine power, must become the cause of the promotion of heavenly teachings and the establishment of the oneness of humanity. Every one of the important souls must arise, blowing over all parts of America the breath of life, conferring upon the people a new spirit, baptizing them with the fire of the love of God, the water of life, and the breaths of the Holy Spirit so that the second birth may become 104 realized. For it is written in the Gospel: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” 2

Therefore, **O ye believers of God in the United States and Canada! Select ye important personages, or else they by themselves, becoming severed from rest and composure of the world, may arise and travel throughout Alaska, the republic of Mexico, and south of Mexico in the Central American republics, such as Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Belize; and through the great South American republics, such as Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, French Guiana, Dutch Guiana, British Guiana, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia**

and Chile; also in the group of the West Indies islands, such as Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Santo Domingo, and the group of islands of the Lesser Antilles, the Islands of Bahama and the Islands of Bermuda; likewise to the islands to the east, west and north of South America, such as Trinidad, Falkland Islands, Galapagòs Islands, Juan Fernandez and Tobago. Visit ye especially the city of Bahia , on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because in the past years this city was christened with the name, BAHIA , there is no doubt that it has been through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, the believers of God must display the utmost effort, upraise the divine melody throughout those regions, promulgate the heavenly teachings and waft over all the spirit of eternal life, so that those republics may become so illumined with the splendors and the effulgences of the Sun of Reality that they may become the objects of the praise and commendation of all other countries. Likewise, ye must give great attention to the Republic of **Panama** , for in that point the Occident and the Orient find each other united through the Panama Canal, and it is also situated between the two great oceans. That place will become very important in the future. The teachings, once established there, will unite the East and the West, the North and the South.

Hence the intention must be purified, the effort ennobled and exalted, so that you may establish affinity between the hearts of the world of humanity. This glorious aim will not become realized save through the promotion of divine teachings which are the foundations of the holy religions.

Consider how the religions of God served the world of humanity! How the religion of Torah became conducive to the glory and honor and progress of the Israelitish nation! How the breaths of the Holy Spirit of His Holiness Christ created affinity and unity between divergent communities and quarreling families! How the sacred power of His Holiness Muḥammad became the means of uniting and harmonizing the contentious tribes and

the different clans of Peninsular Arabia—to such an extent that one thousand tribes were welded into one tribe; strife and discord were done away with; all of them unitedly and with one accord strove in advancing the cause of culture and civilization, and thus were freed from the lowest degree of degradation, soaring toward the height of everlasting glory! Is it possible to find a greater Collective Center in the phenomenal world than this? In comparison to this divine Collective Center, the national collective center, the patriotic collective center, the political collective center and the cultural and intellectual collective center are like child's play!

Now strive ye that the Collective Center of the sacred religions—for the inculcation of which all the Prophets were manifested and which is no other than the spirit of the divine teachings—be spread in all parts of America, so that each one of you may shine forth from the horizon of reality like unto the morning star, divine illumination may overcome the darkness of nature, and the world of humanity may become enlightened. This is the most great work! Should you become confirmed therein, this world will become another world, the surface of the earth will become the delectable paradise, and eternal Institutions be founded.

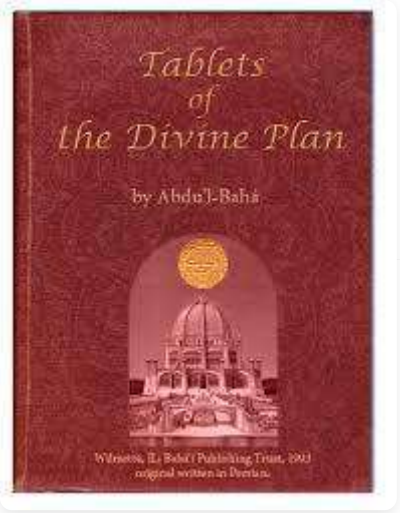
Let whosoever travels to different parts to teach, peruse over mountain, desert, land and sea this supplication:

> O GOD! O God! Thou seest my weakness, lowliness and humility before Thy creatures; nevertheless, I have trusted in Thee and have arisen in the promotion of Thy teachings among Thy strong servants, relying on Thy power and might.
>
> O Lord! I am a broken-winged bird and desire to soar in Thy limitless space. How is it possible for me to do this save through Thy providence and grace, Thy confirmation and assistance.
>
> O Lord! Have pity on my weakness, and strengthen me with Thy power. O Lord! Have pity on my impotence, and assist me with Thy might and majesty.

O Lord! Should the breath of the Holy Spirit confirm the weakest of creatures, he would attain all to which he aspireth and would possess anything he desireth. Indeed, Thou hast assisted Thy servants in the past and, though they were the weakest of Thy creatures, the lowliest of Thy servants and the most insignificant of those who lived upon the earth, through Thy sanction and potency they took precedence over the most glorious of Thy people and the most noble of mankind. Whereas formerly they were as moths, they became as royal falcons, and whereas before they were as brooks, they became as seas, through Thy bestowal and Thy mercy. They became, through Thy most great favor, stars shining on the horizon of guidance, birds singing in the rose gardens of immortality, lions roaring in the forests of knowledge and wisdom, and whales swimming in the oceans of life.

Verily, Thou art the Clement, the Powerful, the Mighty, and the Most Merciful of the merciful.

1. Qur'án 3:103.
2. John 3:6.



Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1956, Albert Windust, a member of the Chicago House of Spirituality and the first publisher of Bahá'í literature in the United States, died. In 1910 he had founded and started printing the first Bahá'í monthly publication "Star of the West".

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From Bahá'í Chronicles ...

> Albert R. Windust
>
> Born: March 28, 1874
>
> Death: March 9, 1956
>
> Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois
>
> Location of Death: Berrien County, Michigan
>
> Burial Location: Mount Hope Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois
>
> "Deeply grieved passing much loved greatly admired staunch ardent promoter Faith, Albert Windust, Herald Covenant, whose notable services Heroic Formative Ages Faith unforgettable. Assure friends relatives fervently supplicating progress soul Kingdom." – Shoghi
>
> Albert Robert Windust was born on Chicago's west side near Hull House. His parents were Thomas (1849-1913) and Sarah Sheffield Windust (1842-1887). His father was a printer, who, shortly after Albert was born, moved with his family to a section of Chicago known as Woodlawn. They

were members of the Episcopal Church. Mrs. Windust, a school teacher and a very active church worker, was the founder of the First Christ Church of Woodlawn (Episcopalian).

In his early years, Albert Windust was not physically strong and this may have accounted for the fact that he had very little formal schooling. He was tutored in his early years by his mother and entered a public school at the fourth grade level. He ended his formak education in the sixth grade. Despite this, Albert Windust during his life attained a depth of knowledge and spiritual wisdom reached by very few.

At the age of fourteen Albert became an apprentice in the printing firm where his father worked. The following November his mother died. His interest in nature awakened a desire to draw, and he became a pupil at Chicago's Art Institute. Through associations made in the printing business, he illustrated stories of many authors, including Opie Read and H. Rider Haggard.

Albert had an inquisitive and questioning nature. He learned of and became interested in the Bahá'í Faith. Word of this came to the ears of the minister of the Methodist Church of which he was a member. The sermon the following Sunday dealt with following false gods. While the sermon thundered around his ears, Albert Windust heard the words of the Lord that had been said to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." He left the church.

Thornton Chase, the first American believer, became instrumental in attracting a small group, among them Albert who, in 1897, became a Bahá'í and gave undeviating devotion to the Faith until the day of his death. He was unquestionably one of its strongest and most competent servants. No activity that concerned the Cause in America but was strongly influenced by his devoted efforts.

In 1900 he married Lucy Roberts (1875-1929) and they had three daughters, Sarah R. (1903-1940), Isabelle and Ethel.

The list of Albert Windust's achievements for the Bahá'í Faith is a long one. He was a member of the first Spiritual Assembly (Chicago). This body enjoyed the distinction of bearing the name of Baytu'l-'Adl (House of Justice) and was so addressed by 'Abdu'l-Baha in a series of Tablets, the first of which, before it was dispatched from the prison of 'Akka, had been engrossed by Mishkin-Qalam, the celebrated Persian penman, in all the known forms of Persian writing.

As a member of that first Assembly, Albert was active in carrying on correspondence with the Bahá'ís of the Orient which led to building the Bahá'í House of Worship in the United States. Through letters between the Bahá'ís of Ishqabad, Russia, and the "House of Spirituality" in Chicago, news was received concerning the erection of the House of Worship in Ishqabad. This activity had been initiated by "Abdu'l-Bahá and was a marvelous means of stimulating the work of the Cause in America. Albert Windust was a member of the committee which drafted the supplication to 'Abdu'l-Bahá asking permission to erect a Bahá'í House of Worship in the United States.

Albert became the first publisher of the Writings of the Faith in America. He printed booklets, early editions of prayers, and the Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh; in 1910 he founded and started printing the first Bahá'í monthly publication, *Star of the West* . In its early years this publication carried a Persian section. The *Star of the West* was circulated in the Orient and thus served to bring the oriental and occidental Bahá'ís into close contact. He gathered and published the well-known three volumes of Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from Tablets written to the Bahá'ís in North America. He also assisted Howard MacNutt in publishing the addresses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá delivered in the United States and Canada, in 1912, under the title Promulgation of Universal Peace. Albert also helped in the compilation and publication of the first five volumes of The Bahá'í World for the years 1926 to 1934.

In 1931 he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to visit the Shrines of

Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb and to see the Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi. He deemed it a privilege he was chosen by Shoghi Effendi to carry to the Holy Land the twenty original Tablets of the Báb reproduced in Shoghi Effendi's translation of *The Dawn-Breakers* , published in 1932.

Albert, from the moment he heard of the Bahá'í Faith, was active in spreading it in America. He was a deep student of the Writings, an able speaker, a profound teacher of the Laws and Ordinances. His classes on the Covenant and Bahá'í Administration were most helpful both to newcomers and Bahá'ís of long association with the Faith. There was a freshness and vigor in his teaching; he radiated a love that reached the hearts. In his every-day life he demonstrated the power of the revealed Word of Bahá'u'lláh.

Albert Robert Windust will long be remembered. The inspiration of his faith and devotion has without doubt moved a great many souls into the orbit of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Here was a man who was truly a channel of a great spiritual force – it shone in his countenance. Its radiance was felt by all who knew him and its influence spread to all with whom he came in contact.

Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote Roy C. Wilhem "some of the old believers who for many years had kept away are not coming back and attending the meetings...Perhaps the friends should take the initiative and make their meetings so inspiring and their activities so interesting ..."

Published on: March 06, 2026

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> "You mentioned in one of your letters that some of the old believers who for many years had kept away are not coming back and attending the meetings. How wonderful it would be if all such persons, together with all those who met the Master and whose life was changed through His influence would come along and help us in spreading these divine teachings! Perhaps the friends should take the initiative and make their meetings so inspiring and their activities so interesting and far-reaching in importance that they would of their own accord come forward and lend us their help." (To Roy C. Wilhelm , West Englewood, through Ruhi Afnan , March 9, 1932).

Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "we should think of Abdu'l-Bahá and study His life and ask ourselves what would He have done, for He is our perfect example in every way...Also you should pray to Bahá'u'lláh..."

Published on: March 06, 2026

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> 758. Pray to Bahá'u'lláh for Help, Think of Abdu'l-Bahá as Perfect Example
>
> "He feels you should by all means show your husband the greatest love and sympathy; if we are ever in any doubt as to how we should conduct ourselves as Bahá'ís we should think of Abdu'l-Bahá and study His life and ask ourselves what would He have done, for He is our perfect example in every way. And you know how tender He was, and how His affection and kindness shone like sunlight on everyone.
>
> "Your husband and your child have a right to your love, and give you a wonderful opportunity of demonstrating your faith in the Cause.
>
> "Also you should pray to Bahá'u'lláh to help unite you with your husband and make your home a true and happy home."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 9, 1946: Ibid.)

Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter titled "Unassailable Foundation of the Cause of God" in response to a "letter concerning questions about the Universal House of Justice."

Published on: March 06, 2026

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Letter to the United States and Canada on racism, 1961 by Ruhiyyih (Mary Maxwell) Khanum 1961-03-09 After her visit to the United States in 1960, Hand of the Cause of God 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum addressed her observations to the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada and the United States. A slightly abridged version of her letter (printed in Bahá'í News U.S. Supplement No. 40, June 1961) is reprinted here [(?) I don't know where this was reprinted. -J.W.] in response to the many recent requests for its republication and because of the timeliness of her statements." National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada

Dearly loved Friends:

```
This is certainly a very late date at which to write the letters to y

It seems to me if we Bahá'ís, and especially the teachers and assembl

Bahá'u'lláh warned us against the evils of civilization when carried

I remember when we had the first Japanese pilgrim here, Shoghi Effend

Bahá'u'lláh said the black people are like the pupil of the eye and s
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When Bahá'u'lláh likens the Negro race to the faculty of sight in the

I am convinced that if we start mass conversion of the Indians and Neg

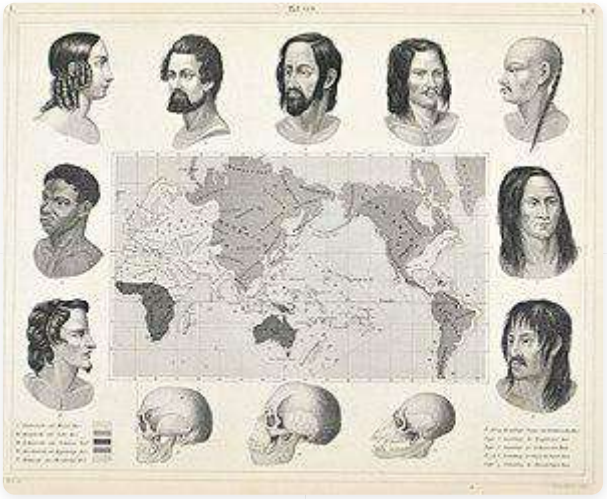
Or are we for the most part absorbed in playing with the Administrati

I was startled and moved by something I saw during my African trip. In

I could see the American Indians straighten their shoulders when I ask

With warmest love to you all, In the service of the beloved Guardian, (signed) Rúhíyyih

Haifa Israel March 9, 1961



Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1953, Ben Levy arrived in Haifa during which he recorded Shoghi Effendi as saying "Just as the Jews have crucified Christ - they suffered 2000 years of persecution - so also will the Moslems suffer a similar fate. The Jews rejected Christ - the Moslems Bahá'u'lláh ...."

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Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1953, Marguerite Sears left Haifa after her Bahá'í Pilgrimage, during which she recorded Shoghi Effendi as making a number of historical, political, and theological observations as well as his making predictions for the the immediate future.

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Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, interior view, slide...all these slides are destroyed... send me the name of the person in America who sent the slide to the Bahá'í in England. This will permit me to stop the exodus of these slides at the source...."

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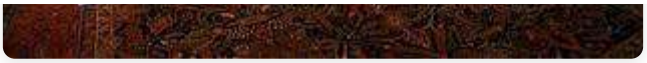
March 9. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote British Bahá'ís "with regard to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, interior view, slide...all these slides are destroyed, and all informed that they should not be used. Therefore, can you send me the name of the person in America who sent the slide to the Bahá'í in England. This will permit me to stop the exodus of these slides at the source...."

> 9 March 1957
>
> Dear Bahá'í Brother:
>
> Your loving letter of March 4th, with regard to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, interior view, slide; which was shown or to be shown at your Summer School.
>
> The Guardian wishes me to see that all these slides are destroyed, and all informed that they should not be used. Therefore, can you send me the name of the person in America who sent the slide to the Bahá'í in England.
>
> This will permit me to stop the exodus of these slides at the source....



Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1987, the UHJ wrote about the interpretations, quoting Shoghi Effendi's words "...regarding future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians...can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 9. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote about the interpretations of Sacred Writings, quoting Shoghi Effendi's words "...regarding future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them; however they can elaborate and elucidate former interpretations, and can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian."

> Interpretations of Sacred Writings
>
> 9 MARCH 1987
>
> To an individual Bahá'í
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 8 February 1987 in which you inquire about the role of the individual in interpretation of the Writings: specifically whether given the existence of interpretations by the Master and the Guardian of passages from the Writings, there remains room for personal interpretations of these same texts. We are instructed to convey the following points in reply.
>
> The interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian are divinely guided statements of what the Word of God means and as such these

interpretations are binding on the friends. However, the existence of authoritative interpretations in no way precludes the individual from engaging in his own study of the teachings and thereby arriving at his own interpretation or understanding. Indeed, Bahá'u'lláh invites the believers to "immerse" themselves in the "ocean" of His "words," that they "may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths."[1]

Far from knowledge being limited, Bahá'u'lláh quotes the Muslim tradition that "every knowledge hath seventy meanings," and asserts that the "meaning" of the Word of God "can never be exhausted."[2] This potential richness of meaning is underlined by the provision whereby future Guardians, while not abrogating the "interpretations of former Guardians," may "elaborate and elucidate former interpretations," as set out in the extract from a letter dated 19 February 1947 which was written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer:

> . . . regarding future Guardians: they cannot "abrogate" the interpretations of former Guardians, as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them; however they can elaborate and elucidate former interpretations, and can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian.

Individual interpretations based on a person's understanding of the teachings constitute the fruit of man's rational power and may well contribute to a more complete understanding of the Faith. Such views, however, lack authority. The believers are, therefore, free to accept or disregard them. Further, the manner in which an individual presents his interpretation is important. For example, he must at no time deny or contend with the authoritative interpretation, but rather offer his idea as a contribution to knowledge, making it clear that his views are merely his own.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Notes

1. KA, ¶182.
2. KI, ¶283; GWB, no. 89.1.

Comments

No comments.

March 9. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to "The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Netherlands" announcing that it could not legislate to make possible the appointment of a successor Guardian to Shoghi Effendi.

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 9. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to "The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the Netherlands" announcing that it could not legislate to make possible the appointment of a successor Guardian to Shoghi Effendi.

You may read the following text, with references, at https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Guardian_(Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_Faith)&oldid=745807581

The Guardian is a now defunct hereditary office of the Bahá'í Faith that was first mentioned in the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi was named as the first Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, and future Guardians were to be appointed from among the male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh. However, since Shoghi Effendi died without having named a successor Guardian, the institution ceased to exist after his death on November 4, 1957, and Shoghi Effendi remains the only individual acknowledged as Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on three different occasions, and the text remains in three parts. In his Will ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addresses the Bahá'í Covenant and the role of Mírzá Muhammad `Alí as a Covenant-breaker; outlines the obligation and responsibilities of the Hands of the Cause of God; explains the election of the Universal House of Justice; and defines the institution of the Guardianship as a hereditary office with its essential function as Interpreter of the Bahá'í writings. Shoghi Effendi describes the Will, along with the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the

Tablets of the Divine Plan, and the Tablet of Carmel, as one of the charters of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Appointing Shoghi Effendi as Guardian Although in the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd Bahá'u'lláh designates Mírzá Muhammad Alí as Abdu'l-Bahá's successor, in his Will, `Abdu'l-Bahá reprimands his brother as "The Center of Sedition, the Prime Mover of mischief" and establishes the institution of the Guardianship, appointing Shoghi Effendi to this newly-created office:

"O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsán (Branches), the Afnán (Twigs) of the Sacred Lote-Tree, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty to turn unto Shoghi Effendi—the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness,—as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the Interpreter of the Word of God and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendents." "O ye the faithful loved ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree. For he is, after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Guardian of the Cause of God, the Afnán, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One. Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words, and like unto them that have broken the Covenant after the Day of Ascension (of Bahá’u’lláh) advance a pretext, raise the standard of revolt, wax stubborn and open wide the door of false interpretation. To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular conviction. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error. The Glory of Glories rest upon you!" Defining the Guardianship as Hereditary The Guardian is to appoint in his own life-time his

successor from among the Aghsán:

"O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—"The child is the secret essence of its sire," that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another branch to succeed him. Guardian and Hands of the Cause of God The Guardian is to appoint the Hands of the Cause of God who are to be under his direction and obey his command:

"O friends! The Hands of the Cause of God must be nominated and appointed by the Guardian of the Cause of God. All must be under his shadow and obey his command. Should any, within or without the company of the Hands of the Cause of God disobey and seek division, the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon him, for he will have caused a breach in the true Faith of God." "This body of the Hands of the Cause of God is under the direction of the Guardian of the Cause of God. He must continually urge them to strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world, for it is the light of Divine Guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined. To disregard, though it be for a moment, this absolute command which is binding upon everyone, is in no wise permitted, that the existent world may become even as the Abhá Paradise, that the surface of the earth may become heavenly, that contention and conflict amidst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments may disappear, that all the dwellers on earth may become one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home. Should differences arise, they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal, that shall include members from all the governments and peoples of the world. "The Hands of the Cause of God must elect from their own number nine persons that shall at all times be occupied in the important services in the work of the Guardian of the Cause of God. The election of these nine must be carried either unanimously or by majority from the company of the Hands of the Cause of God and

these, whether unanimously or by a majority vote, must give their assent to the choice of the one whom the Guardian of the Cause of God hath chosen as his successor. This assent must be given in such wise as the assenting and dissenting voices may not be distinguished (i.e., secret ballot)." Guardian and the Universal House of Justice The Guardian is to be the head of the Universal House of Justice and either attend its deliberations in person or appoint a representative to do so:

"By this body all the difficult problems are to be resolved and the Guardian of the Cause of God is its sacred head and the distinguished member for life of that body. Should he not attend in person its deliberations, he must appoint one to represent him. Should any of the members commit a sin, injurious to the common weal, the Guardian of the Cause of God hath at his own discretion the right to [Covenant-breaker|expel him]], whereupon the people must elect another one in his stead. This House of Justice enacteth the laws and the government enforceth them. The legislative body must reinforce the executive, the executive must aid and assist the legislative body so that through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness and justice may become firm and strong, that all the regions of the world may become even as Paradise itself." Recipient of Huqúqu'lláh Abdu'l-Bahá's Will stipulates that Huqúqu'lláh, which had been made directly to Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá during their life times, would henceforth be made to the Guardian.

"O friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! The Lord, as a sign of His infinite bounties, hath graciously favored His servants by providing for a fixed money offering (Ḥuqúq), to be dutifully presented unto Him, though He, the True One and His servants have been at all times independent of all created things, and God verily is the All-Possessing, exalted above the need of any gift from His creatures. This fixed money offering, however, causeth the people to become firm and steadfast and draweth Divine increase upon them. It is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God, that it may be expended for the diffusion of the Fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Word, for benevolent pursuits and for the common weal." Shoghi Effendi Defines the Guardian As Guardian, Shoghi Effendi held a new and distinct role. Building on the foundation that had been established in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's Will, Shoghi Effendi elaborated on the role of the Guardian in the developing Bahá'í Administrative Order

in several works, including Bahá'í Administration and the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, in the chapter entitled The Administrative Order.

Distinct Institution Shoghi Effendi goes to great lengths to emphasize that the Guardianship is a distinct station from that of Manifestation or Center of the Covenant:

"Dearly-beloved friends! Exalted as is the position and vital as is the function of the institution of the Guardianship in the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and staggering as must be the weight of responsibility which it carries, its importance must, whatever be the language of the Will, be in no wise over-emphasized. The Guardian of the Faith must not under any circumstances, and whatever his merits or his achievements, be exalted to the rank that will make him a co-sharer with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the unique position which the Center of the Covenant occupies—much less to the station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God. So grave a departure from the established tenets of our Faith is nothing short of open blasphemy. As I have already stated, in the course of my references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station, however great the gulf that separates Him from the Author of a Divine Revelation it can never measure with the distance that stands between Him Who is the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and the Guardians who are its chosen ministers. There is a far, far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than there is between the Center of the Covenant and its Author." Shoghi Effendi was critical of Bahá'ís referring to him as a holy personage, asking them not to celebrate his birthday or have his picture on display. Furthermore, he did not refer to his own personal role as an individual, but instead to the institution of the Guardianship. In his correspondences, Shoghi Effendi signed his letters to Bahá'ís as "brother" and "co-worker," to the extent that even when addressing youth, he referred to himself as "Your True Brother."

"No Guardian of the Faith, I feel it my solemn duty to place on record, can ever claim to be the perfect exemplar of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh or the stainless mirror that reflects His light. Though overshadowed by the unfailing, the unerring protection of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb, and however much he may share with 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings, he remains essentially human

and cannot, if he wishes to remain faithful to his trust, arrogate to himself, under any pretense whatsoever, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives which Bahá'u'lláh has chosen to confer upon His Son. In the light of this truth to pray to the Guardian of the Faith, to address him as lord and master, to designate him as his holiness, to seek his benediction, to celebrate his birthday, or to commemorate any event associated with his life would be tantamount to a departure from those established truths that are enshrined within our beloved Faith. The fact that the Guardian has been specifically endowed with such power as he may need to reveal the purport and disclose the implications of the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not necessarily confer upon him a station co-equal with those Whose words he is called upon to interpret. He can exercise that right and discharge this obligation and yet remain infinitely inferior to both of them in rank and different in nature." Importance of the Guardianship Shoghi Effendi goes to great lengths to emphasize the significance of the "Institution of Guardianship," which he calls the "head cornerstone of the Administrative Order of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh,"

"He feels that if ... ponders more deeply about the fundamentals of Divine Revelation, she will also come to understand the Guardianship. Once the mind and heart have grasped the fact that God guides men through a Mouthpiece, a human being, a Prophet, infallible and unerring, it is only a logical projection of this acceptance to also accept the station of Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardians. The Guardians are the evidence of the maturity of mankind in the sense that at long last men have progressed to the point of having one world, and of needing one world management for human affairs. In the spiritual realm they have also reached the point where God could leave, in human hands (i.e., the Guardians'), guided directly by the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh, as the Master states in His Will, the affairs of His Faith for this Dispensation. This is what is meant by 'this is the day which will not be followed by the night'. In this Dispensation, divine guidance flows on to us in this world after the Prophet's ascension, through first the Master, and then the Guardians. If a person can accept Bahá'u'lláh's function, it should not present any difficulty to them to also accept what He has ordained a divinely-guided individual in matters pertaining to His Faith." "Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive

legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed utterances. He interprets what has been specifically revealed, and cannot legislate except in his capacity as member of the Universal House of Justice. He is debarred from laying down independently the constitution that must govern the organized activities of his fellow-members, and from exercising his influence in a manner that would encroach upon the liberty of those whose sacred right is to elect the body of his collaborators." Separation of Powers Shoghi Effendi delineates a distinct separation of powers between the "twin pillars that support this mighty Administrative Structure—the institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice."

"It should be stated, at the very outset, in clear and unambiguous language, that these twin institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh should be regarded as divine in origin, essential in their functions and complementary in their aim and purpose. Their common, their fundamental object is to insure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings. Acting in conjunction with each other these two inseparable institutions administer its affairs, cöordinate its activities, promote its interests, execute its laws and defend its subsidiary institutions. Severally, each operates within a clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction; each is equipped with its own attendant institutions—instruments designed for the effective discharge of its particular responsibilities and duties. Each exercises, within the limitations imposed upon it, its powers, its authority, its rights and prerogatives. These are neither contradictory, nor detract in the slightest degree from the position which each of these institutions occupies. Far from being incompatible or mutually destructive, they supplement each other's authority and functions, and are permanently and fundamentally united in their aims. "From these statements it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is

as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested." Interpreter of the Word of God and Source of Divine Guidance As Guardian, Shoghi Effendi was the "Interpreter of the Word of God," "with the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings." His interpretations of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá were authoritative and binding.

"He feels that if ... ponders more deeply about the fundamentals of Divine Revelation, she will also come to understand the Guardianship. Once the mind and heart have grasped the fact that God guides men through a Mouthpiece, a human being, a Prophet, infallible and unerring, it is only a logical projection of this acceptance to also accept the station of Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardians. The Guardians are the evidence of the maturity of mankind in the sense that at long last men have progressed to the point of having one world, and of needing one world management for human affairs. In the spiritual realm they have also reached the point where God could leave, in human hands (i.e., the Guardians'), guided directly by the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh, as the Master states in His Will, the affairs of His Faith for this Dispensation. This is what is meant by 'this is the day which will not be followed by the night'. In this Dispensation, divine guidance flows on to us in this world after the Prophet's ascension, through first the Master, and then the Guardians. If a person can accept Bahá'u'lláh's function, it should not present any difficulty to them to also accept what He has ordained a divinely-guided individual in matters pertaining to His Faith." Hereditary Shoghi Effendi reiterates the hereditary nature of the Guardianship as was first laid out in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will.

"Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. "In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of

prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn." "The hereditary authority which the Guardian is called upon to exercise, the vital and essential functions which the Universal House of Justice discharges, the specific provisions requiring its democratic election by the representatives of the faithful—these combine to demonstrate the truth that this divinely revealed Order, which can never be identified with any of the standard types of government referred to by Aristotle in his works, embodies and blends with the spiritual verities on which it is based the beneficent elements which are to be found in each one of them. The admitted evils inherent in each of these systems being rigidly and permanently excluded, this unique Order, however long it may endure and however extensive its ramifications, cannot ever degenerate into any form of despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagogy which must sooner or later corrupt the machinery of all man-made and essentially defective political institutions." Expulsion and excommunication The Guardian has the power to declare Bahá'ís who cause disunity in the Faith as Covenant-breakers:

"The Guardian alone holds the power to expulsion or ex-communication from the Faith, which can be effected by the Guardian alone in his capacity as the supreme spiritual head of the Community, has far-reaching spiritual implications affecting the very soul of that believer." "ex-communication, which lies within the powers of the Guardian alone, and is consequently a very weighty weapon to wield." "People who have withdrawn from the Cause because they no longer feel that they can support its Teachings and Institutions sincerely, are not Covenant-breakers--they are non-Bahá'ís and should just be treated as such. Only those who ally themselves actively with known enemies of the Faith who are Covenant-breakers, and who attack the Faith in the same spirit as these people, can be considered, themselves, to be Covenant-breakers. As you know, up to the present time, no one has been permitted to pronounce anybody a Covenant-breaker but the Guardian himself." After Shoghi Effendi Although the Kitáb-i-Aqdas requires every Bahá'í to have a will, Shoghi

Effendi did not have one when he passed away unexpectedly of Asian flu on November 4, 1957 in London, England. Shoghi Effendi did not have any children and had not designated a successor Guardian. With all living male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh having been declared Covenant-breakers by either `Abdu'l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi, no suitable qualifying candidates remained for appointment to the office of Guardian.[1][2][45] On November 19, 1957, nine of the Hands of the Cause issued an "Official Statement" after searching through Shogi Effendi's personal affects in Haifa, Israel, affirming that "the safe and desk have been opened and searched and the non existence of a Will and Testament executed by Shoghi Effendi was definitely established." A subsequent "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God" on November 25 confirmed that Shoghi Effendi had died "without having appointed his successor." The Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, whose members had previously been appointed by Shoghi Effendi, into the Universal House of Justice, whose members are elected by all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world.[48]

On April 8, 1960, Mason Remey, the architect of the Bahá'í Houses of Worship in Uganda and Australia who Shoghi Effendi had appointed a Hand of the Cause and President of the International Bahá'í Council, issued a written announcement claiming that he was the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. He based his claim on the idea that by appointing him as President of the International Bahá'í Council, the embryonic form of the Universal House of Justice which would be led by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi had in fact implicitly named him as the second Guardian. Mason Remey's claim was largely rejected with several notable exceptions, including five members of the National Spiritual Assembly of France lead by Joel Marangella. The remaining 26 Hands of the Cause unanimously declared Remey and whoever followed him Covenant-breakers.

The Universal House of Justice, the only institution authorized to adjudicate on situations not covered in scripture, later announced that it could not legislate to make possible the appointment of a successor Guardian to Shoghi Effendi. The Universal House of Justice also determined that it could not appoint any further Hands of the Cause, whose work is now carried out by other appointed institutions such as the

Continental Counsellors and the Auxiliary Boards.

Comments

No comments.

March 10. On this date in 2015, a letter to the Universal House of Justice asked "whether it is appropriate to translate the phrase “Alláh-u-Abhá” into another language for purposes of its recitation 95 times a day."

Published on: March 06, 2026

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19 May 2015

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

Your email letter of 10 March 2015, asking on behalf of a fellow believer whether it is appropriate to translate the phrase “Alláh-u-Abhá” into another language for purposes of its recitation 95 times a day, has been received at the Bahá’í World Centre and forwarded to our Office for reply. The following has been provided in response to a similar query posed to the Universal House of Justice on a previous occasion:

> The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 29 December 2008, asking why such terms as “Alláh-u-Abhá” and “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá” are used by Bahá’ís rather than being translated into their native tongues, and has asked us to respond as follows.
>
> The House of Justice on another occasion has clarified that the Greatest Name is to be used in its original language for the recitation of “Alláh-u-Abhá” 95 times a day, as well as for its use in the Long Obligatory Prayer and the Prayer for the Dead. It has also clarified that to translate words such as “Alláh-u-Abhá”, “Yá

> Bahá'u'l-Abhá", "Mashriqu'l-Adhkár" and "Ḥazíratu'l-Quds" into one's native language is not acceptable. One exception to this is the alternative use of the words "Right of God" or their equivalent into other languages while the term "Huqúqu'lláh" gradually becomes a part of Bahá'í vocabulary.
>
> In general, one should bear in mind that all translations are, to some degree, inadequate. For instance, the beloved Guardian has pointed out in ... God Passes By that the word "Bahá" signifies at once the "Glory", the "Splendour" and the "Light" of God; there is no single word in English which can express all these. It is, of course, desirable that there be no loss of meaning through translation; thus, it is preferable that certain terms directly related to the Manifestation of God remain in their original form.
>
> (From a letter dated 22 February 2009 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Office of Correspondence

On February 1, 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

Persian translation of Arabic verses

Universal House of Justice

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

1 February 2018

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 7

November 2014 about the translation of the Arabic Writings into Persian. It has considered your questions regarding this matter and has instructed us to write to you as follows. The delay in doing so is deeply regretted.

That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted. In his letters to believers in Iran, Shoghi Effendi also exhorted the friends to recite the Obligatory Prayers in Arabic. However, drawing upon an individual's translation of these Prayers or other Tablets in order to aid one's understanding is, of course, permissible, although such personal translations should not be recited in Bahá'í gatherings. No issue should be made of what individuals do in private prayer.

Latitude has likewise been given to using a personal translation or a gist of a passage in Persian for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Writings, and these may be shared for this purpose with a few others — for instance, in the context of a study group. Further, the House of Justice has previously indicated that adding diacriticals to the Arabic words and explaining the meaning of difficult words are also acceptable means of assisting the friends to gain a better understanding of the Writings in Arabic.

In light of a number of factors, Tajik and Persian are for practical purposes treated differently.

It is hoped that the above information will be of assistance. You may rest assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into European languages.

English works can be translated into European languages.

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations" , "Translation and provisional translations" , "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis" , a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography , a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February 15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

Comments

No comments.

March 10. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu’l-Bahá' gave a talk in Paris, during which he stated "This is the Day in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the shelter of the Word of God.... This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 10. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu’l-Bahá' gave a talk in Paris, later published as "The Day of God" in *Bahá’í Scriptures: Selections from the Utterances of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’* , during which he states "This is the Day in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the shelter of the Word of God. This is the Day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the Day when the East and the West shall embrace each other like unto two lovers. This is the Day in which war and contention shall be forgotten. This is the Day in which nations and governments will enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century."

> THE DAY OF GOD
>
> Do you know in what Day you are living? Do you realize in what Dispensation you are alive? Have you not heard in the Holy Scriptures that at the consummation of the ages there shall appear a Day which is the Sun of all the past Days? This is the Day in which the Lord of Hosts has come down from heaven on the clouds of glory! This is the Day in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the shelter of the Word of God.
>
> This is the Day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the Day when the East and the West shall embrace each other like unto two lovers. This is the Day in which war and contention shall be forgotten. This is the Day in which nations and governments will enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This Century is the fulfillment of the

Promised Century.

This Day is the dawn of the appearances of the traces of the glorious vision of the past prophets and sages.

Now is the dawn; ere long the effulgent Sun shall rise and station itself in the meridian of its majesty. Then you shall observe the effects of the Sun. Then you shall behold what heavenly illumination has become manifest. Then you shall comprehend that these are the infinite bestowals of God! Then you shall see that this world has become another world. Then you shall perceive that the Teachings of God have universally spread.

Rest ye assured that this darkness shall be dispelled and these impenetrable clouds which have darkened the horizon shall be scattered, and the Sun of Reality shall appear in its full splendor. Its rays shall melt the icebergs of hatred and differences which have transformed the moving sea of humanity into hard frozen immensity. The vices of the world of nature shall be changed into praiseworthy attributes, and the lights of the excellencies of the Divine realm shall appear.

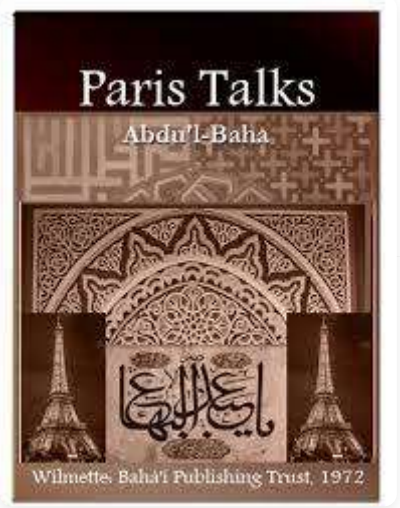
The principles of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, like unto the spirit, shall penetrate the dead body of the world, and the Love of God, like unto an artery, shall beat through the heart of the five continents.

The East shall become illumined, the West perfumed, and the children of men shall enter beneath the all-embracing canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity.

In this Day the rest of the people are asleep. Praise be to God that you are awakened! They are all uninformed, but praise be to God you are informed of the mysteries of God! Thank ye God that in this arena you have preceded others. I hope that each one of you may become a pillar of the palace of the oneness of the world of humanity. May each one of you become a luminous star of this heaven, thus lighting the path of those who are seeking the goal of human perfection.

Paris, France

March 10, 1913.



Comments

No comments.

March 10. On this date in 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley" feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 10. On this date in 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause , Mr. Horace Holley " feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

> To the Hand of the Cause , Mr. Horace Holley
>
> March 10, 1958
>
> Revered Bahá'í Brother:
>
> The Hands in the Holy Land are sending a detailed answer to the questions raised in the letter of February 24, 1958 addressed to us by the American Hands and the National Spiritual Assembly.
>
> We believe that the points covered in our letter also meet the request made in your separate communication of February 25 to your fellow Hands in Haifa.
>
> Here, as you know, we receive letters from all parts of the world which reflect the approach of the believers of diverse backgrounds to the **problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing .** As a result, the Custodians have been made very conscious of the necessity to strive for unity in the approach to fundamental matters affecting the structure and future development of the Cause. The Custodians from East and West are aware of the wisdom of avoiding statements or points of view on basic

issues which cannot be accepted equally by East and West, and indeed by all of the Bahá'í world, especially in this period, so soon after the ascension of the beloved Guardian, when **we are still unable to grasp the full implications of the present situation.**

It would have been a great help if you yourself could have served here in these early and critical months, and given us the benefit of your experience and clarity of thought on the many pressing issues with which we have had to cope.

You will now, we feel sure, understand our delicate position and the reasons why we felt it necessary to urge that the statement "A New Bahá'í Era" be withdrawn from circulation. Your fellow-Hands serving here are confident you will place this whole question and its world-wide implications before the members of your National Assembly in such a way that they will fully understand the reasons underlying the actions taken here.

No doubt when the entire body of the Hands gather at our next meeting later this year we will have many things to discuss, and each one win have a greater contribution to make in view of this tragic year's experiences.

We all send you our devoted love and assure you that you are often remembered in our prayers.

Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Comments

No comments.

March 10. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding the promotion of world peace, in anticipation of the Lesser Peace which was to be established prior to the year 2000.

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 10. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding the promotion of world peace, in anticipation of the Lesser Peace which was to be established prior to the year 2000.

> The Universal House of Justice
>
> Department of the Secretariat
>
> 10 March 1987
>
> [To an individual]
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 27 January 1987 and has asked us to convey on its behalf the following in response to the points you have raised.
>
> It is not advisable for Bahá'í institutions or individuals to initiate actions designed to prod government leaders to urge their government or the leaders of other governments to convene the world conference called for by Bahá'u'lláh and echoed in The Promise of World Peace . Two points should be borne in mind in this regard: (1) Because of the political gravity of the decisions implied by this call and the differing political attitudes which it evokes, such actions on the part of the Bahá'í community would embroil the friends in partisan politics. There is quite a difference between identifying, as does the Peace Statement , the need for a convocation of world leaders and initiating the political processes towards its realization. (2) In the writings of the Faith (e.g., the closing passages of The Promised

Day Is Come), it is clear that the establishment of the Lesser Peace , of which the conference of leaders will be a related event, will come about independently of any Bahá'í plan or action. This is not to say that Bahá'ís should be inert. Indeed, Bahá'ís may promote the concept of the Lesser Peace with all that it implies without engaging in the political processes which its realization will require.

The House of Justice feels that the task before the Bahá'ís is to prepare the ground for the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of world government. This requires a number of related activities which have been indicated in the goals of previous and present Plans of the community based on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan . The activities which will indirectly prepare the world to make the final stride include the following.

The establishment as rapidly as possible of firmly grounded, efficiently functioning Local Spiritual Assemblies in every part of the world, so that seekers everywhere will have a point of reference to which they can turn for guidance and for the Teachings of the Faith. This implies a vast increase in Bahá'í membership. Although the Canadian and many other Bahá'í Communities have achieved remarkable progress, much work is required to bring the Bahá'í institutions all over the world to the degree of maturation that is needed.

A second important activity is the deepening of the believers, of all ages, in their understanding of and obedience to the Teachings of the Faith. A third is the proclamation of the Faith to all strata of society, and in particular to those in authority and to leaders of thought so that those who hold the direction of peoples in their hands will learn accurately about the nature and tenets of the Faith and will grow to respect it and implement its principles. A fourth is the promotion of Bahá'í scholarship, so that an increasing number of believers will be able to analyze the problems of mankind in every field and to show how the Teachings solve them. A fifth is the development of relations between the Bahá'í International Community

and the United Nations, both directly with the highest United Nations institutions and at a grass-roots level in areas of rural development, education, etc.

These different activities, which began a long time ago and are still going on, coupled with the presentation of The Promise of World Peace to the leaders of the world, will gradually bring about circumstances which will indicate the direction of subsequent actions. The House of Justice will advise the Bahá'í world when the time is ripe for such actions. The unpredictability of certain events in the world, which are likely to change the current course of certain processes, makes it impracticable for the House of Justice to respond with precision to some of your questions.

The House of Justice in its message to the Bahá'ís of the World dated 2 January 1986 referred to Shoghi Effendi's perception of a dialectic of victory and crisis in the organic life of the Cause. This indicates the instrumentality of the forces of opposition which will help to bring about, over a period of time, conditions necessary for the Local and National Spiritual Assemblies to act effectively as Local and National Houses of Justice.

The stages of the evolution of these institutions, which will synchronize with the establishment of the Lesser Peace , are indicated in the writings of the beloved Guardian, such as in the following extract:

> Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power
>
> .
>
> (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 6–7)

Your specific question about whether or not Bahá'ís in North America "are

permitted to run for election to school boards, town or municipal councils, hospital boards and for local enforcement officer positions" should be answered by the National Assemblies concerned.

The completion of the buildings on the Arc "which will synchronize with two no less significant developments—the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions—the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world" speaks, as you have rightly perceived, "to the readiness of the Bahá'í Administrative Order to manage the ever-growing and complex affairs of the Cause as well as an increased capacity to interface with the non-Bahá'í world and its institutions."

Regarding the question in the final paragraph of your letter, the following reply was written on behalf of the beloved Guardian in a letter dated 14 March 1939 to an individual believer.

> Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Super State —your view on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in the "Unfoldment of World Civilization."

The fact that the Bahá'í institutions will not be directly involved in the eventual convocation of world leaders and in effecting the political unity of nations does not mean that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of mankind. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order , which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are

constantly engaged in laying the groundwork for a permanent peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

No comments.

March 10. On this date in 1866, during his exile in Edirne, Bahá'u'lláh moved from the house of Amru'lláh, which he shared with his half-brother Mírzá Yahyá Ṣubḥ-i-Azal, to the house of Ridá Big. He called this the 'Most Great Separation'.

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 10. On this date in 1866, during his exile in Edirne , Bahá'u'lláh moved from the house of Amru'lláh, which he shared with his half-brother Mírzá Yahyá Ṣubḥ-i-Azal , to the house of Ridá Big. He called this the 'Most Great Separation'.

Comments

No comments.

March 10. On this date in 2016, Todd Lawson gave a talk titled "The Bahá'í Reception of the Qur'an" at the "Communities of the Qur’an Conference: Modern and Classical Interpretations of Islamic Scripture" convened at Rice University in Houston, Texas.

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 10. On this date in 2016, Todd Lawson gave a talk titled "The Bahá'í Reception of the Qur'an" at the "Communities of the Qur’an Conference: Modern and Classical Interpretations of Islamic Scripture" convened at Rice University in Houston, Texas.

On January 25, 2001, the Ontario Human Rights Commission asked its Board of Inquiry to investigate a case of alleged discrimination against the University of Toronto. " Dr. Benjamin Todd Lawson believes he was denied a permanent tenured position with the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies because he's a member of the Baha'i faith."

> Ontario Human Rights Commission to investigate discrimination case against U of T
>
> The Ontario Human Rights Commission has asked the Board of Inquiry to investigate a case of alleged discrimination involving a former contract professor at the University of Toronto.
>
> Dr. Benjamin Todd Lawson believes he was denied a permanent tenured position with the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies because he's a member of the Baha'i faith.
>
> His lawyer says he was passed over for two positions at the university in the early 1990s, even though he met the qualifications.
>
> The university says it did not discriminate against Lawson.
>
> Lawson says he feels vindicated by the commission's decision to appoint a board of inquiry.

Comments

No comments.

March 10. On this date in 1951, a letter to an NSA said "your Assembly did quite right to deprive all three of their voting rights. Their conduct in carrying out a Moslem marriage...are most reprehensible, to say the least...other friends may be encouraged in moments of weakness, to err."

Published on: March 06, 2026

March 10. On this date in 1951, a letter from Shoghi Effendi to the NSA of India, Pakistan, and Burma said "In connection with your question regarding the case of Mr. Mrs. ... and their daughter, the Guardian considers that your Assembly did quite right to deprive all three of their voting rights. Their conduct in carrying out a Moslem marriage in the circumstances set forth by you in your letter, and contrary to Bahá'í law, are most reprehensible, to say the least, and if such actions are not strongly censured by the Bahá'ís, other friends may be encouraged in moments of weakness, to err."

> 191. Parents' Voting Rights Can Be Suspended if Consent is Given Contrary to Bahá'í Law
>
> "In connection with your question regarding the case of Mr. Mrs. ... and their daughter, the Guardian considers that your Assembly did quite right to deprive all three of their voting rights. Their conduct in carrying out a Moslem marriage in the circumstances set forth by you in your letter, and contrary to Bahá'í law, are most reprehensible, to say the least, and if such actions are not strongly censured by the Bahá'ís, other friends may be encouraged in moments of weakness, to err."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Pakistan and Burma, March 10, 1951)

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter later published as "The Unfolding of World Civilization," a document included in the book titled "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh"

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter later published as "The Unfolding of World Civilization", a document included in the book titled "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh", in which Shoghi Effendi summarizes late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican histories, referring to "the further dismemberment decreed by the Treaty of Versailles" of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Versailles was signed between Germany and some of the Allied nations, and it did not pertain to the Ottoman Empire. Shoghi Effendi considers the British seizure of Palestine a "liberation." Shoghi Effendi also describes the suffering of Ottoman subjects in World War I to have been "well-deserved calamities" unloosed by the "directing Hand" of Bahá'u'lláh.

March 11. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter later published as *The Unfolding of World Civilization,* a document included in the book titled *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*

Within the *The Unfolding of World Civilization* are sections, such as one entitled *Collapse of Islam* , in which Shoghi Effendi summarizes late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican history in these terms...

> The murder of that arrogant despot in the year 1876; the Russo-Turkish conflict that soon followed in its wake; the wars of liberation which succeeded it; the rise of the Young Turk movement; the Turkish Revolution of 1909 that precipitated the downfall of ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd; the Balkan wars with their calamitous consequences; **the liberation of Palestine** enshrining within its bosom the cities of ‘Akká and Haifa, the world center of an emancipated Faith; **the further dismemberment decreed by**

> **the Treaty of Versailles** ; the abolition of the Sultanate and the downfall of the House of Uthmán; the extinction of the Caliphate; the disestablishment of the State Religion; the annulment of the Sharí'ah Law and the promulgation of a universal Civil Code; the suppression of various orders, beliefs, traditions and ceremonials believed to be inextricably interwoven with the fabric of the Muslim Faith—these followed with an ease and swiftness that no man had dared envisage. In these devastating blows, administered by friend and foe alike, by Christian nations and professing Muslims, **every follower of the persecuted Faith of Bahá'u'lláh recognized evidences of the directing Hand of the departed Founder of his religion, Who, from the invisible Realm, was unloosing a flood of well-deserved calamities upon a rebellious religion and nation.** *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, page 175*

Three thoughts from this passage:

1) Shoghi Effendi considers the British seizure of Palestine a "liberation." By the time *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* was published in 1938, the British had permitted the immigration of hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers to Palestine, and in 1937 the Peel Commission proposed a partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab sectors. The proposal was rejected by both the Arab and Jewish leadership. It is not mere conspiratorial inklings that lead detractors to consider the Bahá'í Faith to have ties to Zionism or British and Russian Imperialism.

2) Shoghi Effendi refers to "the further dismemberment decreed by the Treaty of Versailles" of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Versailles was signed between Germany and some of the Allied nations, and it did not pertain to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire would cease hostilities with Allies through the Armistice of Mudros, and Treaty of Sevres that was signed at the end of World War I was never ratified by the Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul. The nascent Republic of Turkey would later sign the Treaty of Lausanne with the Allies.

3) Shoghi Effendi describes the suffering of Ottoman subjects in World War I to have been "well-deserved calamities" unloosed by the "directing Hand" of Bahá'u'lláh. One wonders how anyone can equate Bahá'u'lláh's exile , where he was still allowed to lead

his religious community and publicly declare himself *Him whom God shall make manifest* , with the suffering of World War I

In the following section, *Deterioration of Christian Institutions* , Shoghi Effendi similarly targets Christianity...

> Time alone can reveal the nature of the rôle which the institutions directly associated with the Christian Faith are destined to assume in this, the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era , this dark age of transition through which humanity as a whole is passing. Such events as have already transpired, however, are of such a nature as can indicate the direction in which these institutions are moving. We can, in some degree, appraise the probable effect which the forces operating both within the Bahá'í Faith and outside it will exert upon them.

In the section titled *Community of the Most Great Name* , Shoghi Effendi lauds the Bahá'ís...

> Conscious of their high calling, confident in the society-building power which their Faith possesses, they press forward, undeterred and undismayed, in their efforts to fashion and perfect the necessary instruments wherein the embryonic **World Order of Bahá'u'lláh** can mature and develop. It is this building process, slow and unobtrusive, to which the life of the world-wide Bahá'í Community is wholly consecrated, that **constitutes the one hope of a stricken society.** For this process is actuated by the generating influence of God's changeless Purpose, and is evolving within the framework of the Administrative Order of His Faith .
>
> In a world the structure of whose political and social institutions is impaired, whose vision is befogged, whose conscience is bewildered, whose religious systems have become anemic and lost their virtue, **this healing Agency, this leavening Power, this cementing Force, intensely alive and all-pervasive, has been taking shape, is crystallizing into institutions, is mobilizing its forces, and is preparing for the spiritual conquest and the complete redemption of mankind.**

> Though the society which incarnates its ideals be small, and its direct and tangible benefits as yet inconsiderable, yet the potentialities with which it has been endowed, and through which it is destined to regenerate the individual and rebuild a broken world, are incalculable.

Shoghi Effendi continues in *Divine Retribution* ...

> Ominous indeed is the voice of Bahá'u'lláh that rings through these prophetic words: "O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity followeth you, and grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that which ye have committed hath been effaced in My sight." And again: "We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!"

He concludes with *World Unity the Goal* ...

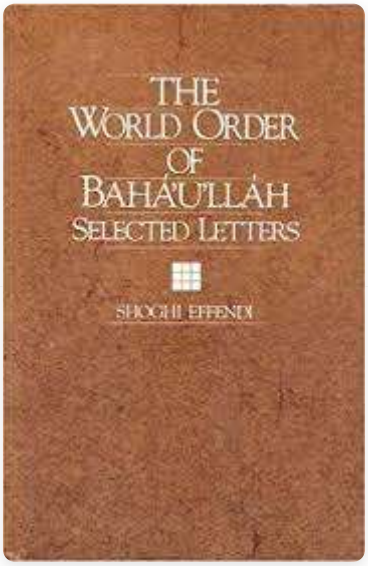
> A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.
>
> ...
>
> What more fitting conclusion to this theme than these words of Bahá'u'lláh, written in anticipation of the golden age of His Faith—the age in which the face of the earth, from pole to pole, will mirror the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Paradise? "This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendors of the Light that shineth from the face of thy Lord, the Gracious,

the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have then called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days. This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: 'Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne!' The realm of glory exclaimeth: 'Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future.'"

Shoghi.

Haifa, Palestine,

March 11, 1936.



Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Humanity is crying for salvation; and it is only by the Bahá'ís going into the various areas of the world, that it can be brought to them. This is the reason the Guardian has encouraged all of the friends to disperse to new territories, for..."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The greatest glory and honor which can come to an individual is to bring the light of guidance to some new soul. The quickening power of the Holy Spirit, which has come into the world through Bahá'u'lláh, is the source of immortal life; and those who are quickened by this spirit in this world will find themselves in great honor and glory in the next world. The most meritorious service which anyone could render is to bring the light of divine guidance and the quickening power of the spirit to an entirely new area. Humanity is crying for salvation; and it is only by the Bahá'ís going into the various areas of the world, that it can be brought to them. This is the reason the Guardian has encouraged all of the friends to disperse to new territories, for this is the hour for the quickening of the world."

> 1994. The greatest glory and honor which can come to an individual is to bring the light of guidance to some new soul. The quickening power of the Holy Spirit, which has come into the world through Bahá'u'lláh, is the source of immortal life; and those who are quickened by this spirit in this world will find themselves in great honor and glory in the next world. The most meritorious service which anyone could render is to bring the light of divine guidance and the quickening power of the spirit to an entirely new area. Humanity is crying for salvation; and it is only by the Bahá'ís going into the various areas of the world, that it can be brought to them. This is the reason the Guardian has encouraged all of the friends to disperse to

new territories, for this is the hour for the quickening of the world.

(From a letter dated 11 March 1956 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í Community of Tacoma, US)

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1981, an LSA in Hawaii asked "about the enrollment of individuals who are mentally incompetent, drug users, alcoholics, etc."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1981, an LSA in Hawaii asked "about the enrollment of individuals who are mentally incompetent, drug users, alcoholics, etc."

> 259. Mental Instability Has No Bearing Upon Acceptance of an Enrollment
>
> "In response to your letter of 11 March 1981, conveying the question of one of your Local Spiritual Assemblies about the enrollment of individuals who are mentally incompetent, drug users, alcoholics, etc., the Universal House of Justice asks us to convey the following.
>
> "The acceptance of a person into the Bahá'í community should be based not on whether he is leading an exemplary life, but on whether the Assembly is reasonably certain that he is sincere in his declaration of faith in Bahá'u'lláh and that he knows of the laws which would affect his personal conduct, so that he does not enter the community under a misapprehension. The question of mental instability has no bearing upon the acceptance of an enrollment unless it is of such a nature that it affects the ability of the declarant to judge whether or not he believes in Bahá'u'lláh."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, April 19, 1981)

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice wrote in response to a question about a reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice wrote in response to a question about a reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

> The Universal House of Justice
>
> Department of the Secretariat
>
> 11 March 1994
>
> [To an individual]
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> Your letter of 31 December 1993 was received and referred to us for a response.
>
> You quote the reference in paragraph 42 of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and ask how this can be understood as an anticipation of the institution of the Guardianship.
>
> As you correctly state, this passage relates entirely to the disposition of endowments dedicated to charity. In it Bahá'u'lláh provides that the authority in this matter passes, after Him, to the Aghṣán . The Aghṣán comprise not only the sons of Bahá'u'lláh, but all His male descendants. Thus in His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to Shoghi Effendi as "the chosen branch," and provides that if the eldest son of the Guardian did not possess the qualities which would befit him to be appointed as his successor, the Guardian should "choose another branch [Ghuṣn] to succeed him." There is also a letter in which Shoghi Effendi refers to his brother, Ḥusayn, as a "Ghuṣn."
>
> It should be noted that, although only two of the Aghṣán are explicitly

mentioned in the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd (the Ghuṣn-i-A‘ẓam and the Ghuṣn-i-Akbar , namely ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí), paragraph 42 of the Aqdas refers to more than two. Arabic nouns have three forms for number:

Singular Branch Ghuṣn

Dual two branches Ghuṣnán

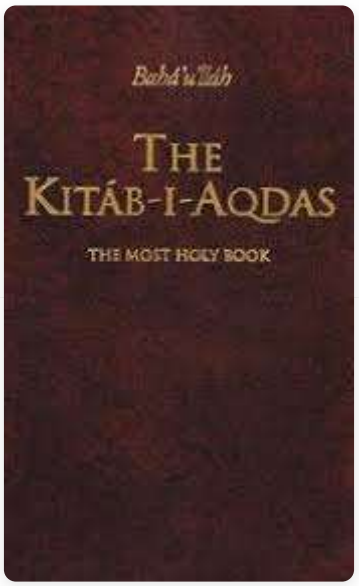
Plural more than two branches Aghṣán

The Aqdas foresees a hereditary function for the Aghṣán in relation to the disposition of endowments dedicated to charity. Paragraph 42 of the Aqdas continues by stating that “after them” [i.e. the Aghṣán] this authority passes “to the House of Justice—should it be established in the world by then.” This envisages the possibility that the line of Aghṣán would come to an end before the Universal House of Justice came into existence, which is, in fact, what happened on the death of Shoghi Effendi.

In this way, therefore, this passage can be seen as anticipating the institution of the Guardianship….

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat



Comments

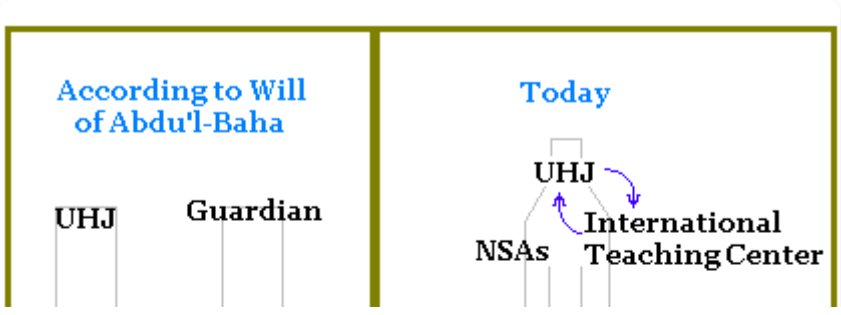
> **Sertorius126:**
> Crystal clear. The Guardian functioned without the Universal House of Justice during his lifetime. And now through the chance and purpose of Providence the Universal House of Justice functions without a living Guardian.

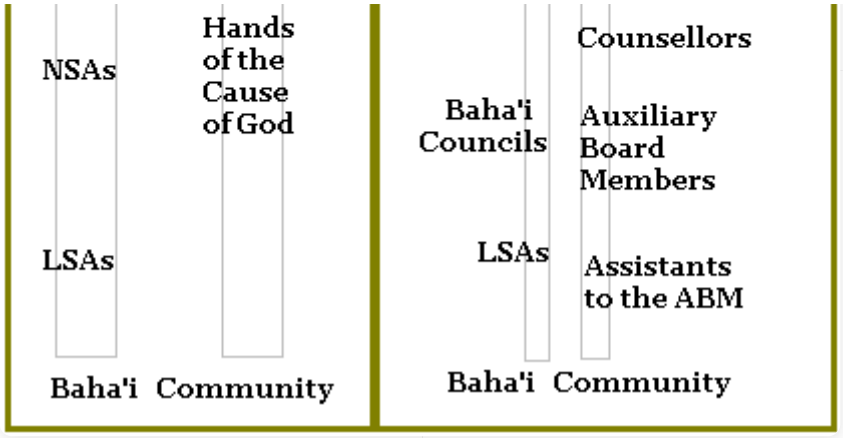
March 11. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The greatest gift that we can give to the poor and the down-trodden is to aid to build up the divine institutions inaugurated in this day by Bahá'u'lláh as these institutions, and this World Order when established, will eliminate the …."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The greatest gift that we can give to the poor and the down-trodden is to aid to build up the divine institutions inaugurated in this day by Bahá'u'lláh as these institutions, and this World Order when established, will eliminate the causes of poverty and the injustices which afflict the poor."

> 515 Regarding your question concerning helping the poor: The Bahá'ís should not go so far as to refrain from extending charity to the needy, if they are able and willing to do so. However, in this, as in many other things, they should exert moderation. The greatest gift that we can give to the poor and the down-trodden is to aid to build up the divine institutions inaugurated in this day by Bahá'u'lláh as these institutions, and this World Order when established, will eliminate the causes of poverty and the injustices which afflict the poor. We should, therefore, do both, support our Bahá'í Fund, and also be kind and generous to the needy.
>
> (From a letter dated 11 March 1942, written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)





Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 2011, a parent of a homosexual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a "struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings" with their personal views.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 2011, a parent of a homosexual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a "struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings" with their personal views.

Need for sympathy for those with a homosexual orientation and their need for struggle to overcome by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 2013-04-22 22 April 2013

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letters of 11 March 2011 and 5 May 2012 describing your struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings with your own views on homosexuality, which have evolved as you have reflected on your relationship with your son. We have been asked to convey to you the following and in so doing express our regret that, owing to the pressure of work at the Bahá'í World Centre and the time necessary to carefully consider the many facets of your heartfelt questions, our reply has been so long delayed. The House of Justice appreciates the candour with which you have expressed your concerns, and your earnest desire to comprehend aspects of the teachings more fully is warmly acknowledged.

The understanding about human beings today is heavily influenced by materialistic assumptions. Perspectives of social movements, leaders of thought, and the media are shaped by them. Even the findings of science are interpreted according to such prevalent cultural notions. It is not surprising, then, that there are many ideas about human identity and behaviour in contemporary society commonly accepted as truths that conflict with the Bahá'í teachings. Yet, as Bahá'u'lláh asks every thoughtful soul, "Where shalt thou secure the cord of thy faith and fasten the tie of thine obedience?"

His answer, revealed in innumerable passages, is, as you know, unambiguous. “The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind.” “No man, however acute his perception,” He affirms, “can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained.” And He counsels not to weigh “the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring Balance established amongst men”, and in “this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed….” The Manifestation institutes His laws and ordinances in accordance with His intrinsic knowledge of human reality and His intended aims for individual and collective transformation. From a Bahá’í perspective, then, it is the teachings of the Manifestation of God that clarify the essential elements of human identity.

In contrast to many contemporary conceptions, the Bahá’í teachings maintain that a person must rise above certain material aspects of human nature to develop and manifest inherent spiritual qualities that characterize his or her true self. The Sacred Texts contain laws and exhortations that, in many instances, redirect or restrict behaviours that arise from impulses, tendencies, and desires, whether inborn or acquired. Some of these are physical, while others are emotional or psychological. Yet, whatever their origin, it is through their regulation and control that the higher, spiritual nature is able to predominate and flourish. Those who are not Bahá’ís may have no cause to take into account such considerations. A Bahá’í, however, cannot set aside the implications of these teachings and must endeavour to respond to the best of his or her ability, though it be little by little and day by day. In so doing, all believers face challenges, although the specific type or extent of a test may differ. They act with faith in Bahá’u’lláh’s declaration, “Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures”, and they respond to His call, “Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty.”

You have suggested that homosexuals could be made to feel as though they are “on the edges of society” and “inherently deficient”, which would drive them away from the Faith. Such an outcome would be antithetical to the Bahá’í teachings. It may be reassuring to you to know that Shoghi Effendi has stated, in letters written on his

behalf, that a Bahá'í who has a homosexual orientation must strive daily to come closer to the Bahá'í standard and, in this process, should be treated with tolerance and receive help, advice, and sympathy; he also acknowledges that such an inclination can be "a great burden to a conscientious soul" and states that those concerned should "adhere to their Faith, and not withdraw from active service, because of the tests they experience" since, "in one way or another, we are all tested; and this must strengthen us, not weaken us." Whatever the particular challenge he or she may face, through the recognition of Bahá'u'lláh and steadfast effort to abide by His teachings and to serve humanity, every believer can have a rich and rewarding Bahá'í life.

Although they affirm their conviction that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings reflect God's purpose for humankind in this Day, Bahá'ís do not seek to impose their values on others. They do not pass judgement on others on the basis of their own moral standards and can never presume to know the standing of any soul in the eyes of God. Rather, the friends are enjoined to show forth unconditional love, to engage in fellowship with all, and to be forbearing, concerned with their own shortcomings and not those of others. They are to have a sin-covering eye, focusing on good qualities and ignoring the bad, and they must eschew backbiting and gossip. As the Bahá'í community continues to grow and develop, increasing its involvement with the wider society, such characteristics will become more pronounced and a hallmark of Bahá'í culture. Given this, to regard those with a homosexual orientation with prejudice or disdain, the House of Justice has repeatedly emphasized, would be entirely against the spirit of the Faith. In response to your question about the position a Bahá'í would take in relation to supporting the human rights of homosexuals, we have enclosed a copy of a letter dated 27 October 2010 written on behalf of the House of Justice to an individual believer that discusses this topic, and it is hoped the guidance contained therein will allay any concern you may have.

As to the possibility of same-sex marriage within the Faith, according to the teachings, Bahá'í marriage is a union between a man and a woman. This is set forth in the Writings and is not susceptible to change by the House of Justice.

You have also asked how you should deal with the conflict you face in being a Bahá'í while struggling to appreciate certain aspects of the teachings, and you wonder

whether you should withdraw from the Faith or simply acknowledge that on this point you have a different view. It can be helpful to consider that, on occasion, a believer may discover that a personal understanding differs to some degree from the teachings. How can it be otherwise, when our conceptions are forged in a social milieu that Bahá'u'lláh has come to radically transform? "An exact and thorough comprehension of so vast a system, so sublime a revelation, so sacred a trust," Shoghi Effendi reminds us, "is for obvious reasons beyond the reach and ken of our finite minds." A sensible approach is simply to recognize that the human mind is both finite and fallible and that acquiring spiritual insight and greater understanding is a gradual and ever-unfolding process that requires time, continued study, reflection on action, and consultation with others. This perspective is quite different, however, from contending with or attempting to change explicit provisions of the Faith. Humility is required, rather than an insistence that one's personal views at any given time are correct. Thus, there is no reason why you should feel a need to withdraw from the Bahá'í community. Rather you are encouraged to keep an open mind and acknowledge, like every other Bahá'í, that there are elements of the Revelation that you are striving to understand more fully. This does not prevent you from showing forth unconditional love and support for your son.

You are assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that you and your son may be the recipients of heavenly blessings and bestowals.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1988, Alessandro Bausani died in Rome. He was a noted Italian Orientalist and convert to the Bahá'í Faith.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1988, Alessandro Bausani died in Rome. He was a noted Italian Orientalist and convert to the Bahá'í Faith.

The *Encyclopædia Iranica* has an article about him .

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 2019, the Bahá'í International Community presented a statement, "Creating the World Anew: Leaving No One Behind", at the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York City.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 2019, the Bahá'í International Community presented a statement, *Creating the World Anew: Leaving No One Behind*, at the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York City.

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1970, the NSA of Canada wrote the UHJ concerning difficulties "in getting the Indian believers on reservations to hold regular Nineteen Day Feasts" to which the response stated "to indigenous believers it is important that the process of weaning them away from the old ..."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1970, the NSA of Canada wrote the Universal House of Justice concerning difficulties "in getting the Indian believers on reservations to hold regular Nineteen Day Feasts " to which the response stated "to indigenous believers it is important that the process of weaning them away from the old forms should be accomplished gradually so as not to destroy their spirit, and your Assembly should not be too rigid in these matters."

> 89. We have considered your letter of March 11, 1970 concerning the difficulties you are experiencing in getting the Indian believers on reservations to hold regular Nineteen Day Feasts .
>
> In applying instructions about Nineteen Day Feasts , as well as other matters of administration, to indigenous believers it is important that the process of weaning them away from the old forms should be accomplished gradually so as not to destroy their spirit, and your Assembly should not be too rigid in these matters.
>
> (3 April 1970 written by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada)

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Just as the Jews have crucified Christ - they suffered 2000 years of persecution - so also will the Moslems suffer a similar fate. The Jews rejected Christ - the Moslems Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Just as the Jews have crucified Christ - they suffered 2000 years of persecution - so also will the Moslems suffer a similar fate. The Jews rejected Christ - the Moslems Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause."

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1953, "Amelia Bowman asked about Pakistan and the Guardian explained that though Moslem - this is no doubt temporary and will be absorbed later by the Republic of India. The Bahá'ís have a very great struggle there in the East."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1953, " Amelia Bowman asked about Pakistan and the Guardian explained that though Moslem - this is no doubt temporary and will be absorbed later by the Republic of India. The Bahá'ís have a very great struggle there in the East."

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "...There are many Presbyterian and Anglican Missionaries in Persia. Its culmination will end with the Pope. His opposition will lead to his downfall. By opposing the Faith he will plant the seeds to his own downfall."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Anglican Church has attacked the Faith in Persia; - gradually it will spread to the Orthodox Russian Church - they are very strong. And - eventually it will go to the Catholic Church. Its culmination will end with the Pope . His opposition will lead to his downfall. By opposing the Faith he will plant the seeds to his own downfall."

Comments

No comments.

March 11. On this date in 1896. Yvonne Liegois was born in Paris, France. She would later move to Bolivia where she became a Bahá'í. Although Marina Núñez del Prado was the first Bolivian Bahá'í, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 11. On this date in 1896. Yvonne Liegois was born in Paris, France. She would later move to Bolivia where she became a Bahá'í on May 18, 1941. Although Marina Núñez del Prado became the first Bolivian Bahá'í on February 2, 1941, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia.

Born in France on March 11, 1896, Yvonne Cuellar and her husband, Arturo Cuellar, lived in La Paz, Bolivia, in the 1940s where they had an American boarder, Eleanor Adler, who was first Bahá'í pioneer to Bolivia. Both she and her husband became Bahá'ís and helped establish the first Baha'i community of La Paz.

Yvonne Liegois Cuellar became a Bahá'í on May 18, 1941. Although Marina Núñez del Prado , a celebrated sculptor, was the first Bolivian to become a Bahá'í, on February 2, 1941, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia. Shoghi Effendi called her the "Mother of Bolivia". Arturo Cuellar would later become a Bahá'í in 1946 through his wife's efforts.

In 1953, the Cuellars moved to the United States but returned to Bolivia in 1956 at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of that country. In 1958 she traveled to France to help establish the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly, which was dissolved two years later through reports of Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi by the authority of the Custodians due to a majority of the Assembly's acceptance of Charles Mason Remey's claim to being the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith subsequent to the death of Shoghi Effendi.

In 1968 the Cuellars once again moved to the United States. Yvonne Cullear died in

Littleton, Colorado on December 7, 1983.

Comments

No comments.

March 12. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Life is not easy for the young people of this generation... find before themselves nothing but failures, and see in the future nothing but darkness. What they need is the light manifested by Bahá'u'lláh..."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 12. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Life is not easy for the young people of this generation. They enter life with a heart full of hope, but find before themselves nothing but failures, and see in the future nothing but darkness. What they need is the light manifested by Bahá'u'lláh, for that brightens their soul and stimulates their vigour in facing difficulties."

> 2255 . Life is not easy for the young people of this generation. They enter life with a heart full of hope, but find before themselves nothing but failures, and see in the future nothing but darkness. What they need is the light manifested by Bahá'u'lláh, for that brightens their soul and stimulates their vigour in facing difficulties.
>
> (12 March 1933 to an individual believer)

Comments

No comments.

March 12. On this date in 1921, Gloria ‘Alá'í was born to the prominent ‘Alá'í family in Tehran. Her father was Rahmatu'llah Khan 'Ala'i and a cousin was Suhayl Ahmad ‘Alá'í, whose father was Ni'mat'u'lláh, brother of Shu'á'u'lláh. Gloria would marry Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faizi.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 12. On this date in 1921, Gloria ‘Alá'í was born to the prominent ‘Alá'í family in Tehran. Her father was Rahmatu'llah Khan 'Ala'i and a cousin was Suhayl Ahmad ‘Alá'í , whose father was Ni'mat'u'lláh, brother of Shu'á'u'lláh . Gloria ‘Alá'í would marry Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faizi .

Comments

No comments.

March 12. On this date in 2003, Elsa Scola Bausani died. She was a member of the NSA of Italy, and a bride in the first Bahá'í marriage in Italy, to Alessandro Bausani on October 27, 1951.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 12. On this date in 2003, Elsa Scola Bausani died. She was a member of the NSA of Italy, and a bride in the first Bahá'í marriage in Italy, to Alessandro Bausani on October 27, 1951.

Comments

No comments.

March 12. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to "The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia" calling for the establishment of local and national Bahá'í funds.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 12. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter (also here) to "The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia" calling for the establishment of local and national Bahá'í funds.

> 12 March 1923
>
> The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia.
>
> Fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God!
>
> Over a year has elapsed since that calamitous Hour, when the glorious Person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was veiled from mortal eyes and His Spirit ascended the Kingdom of Glory; and I feel that the time is now ripe to take those fresh and momentous decisions which will enable us to fulfil, speedily and faithfully, the last wishes of our departed Master.
>
> The year has been to the outside world a year of fear and suffering, of disillusion and turmoil. To us, however, the bereaved followers of a gracious and loving Master, it has been, despite the passing cares which His sudden departure must necessarily entail, a period of hope, of wholesome activity, marked throughout with a spirit of undiminished confidence in His power and of fidelity to His Cause.

From the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, the unnumbered servants of Bahá'u'lláh, disdainful of the evil machinations of the enemies of His Cause, the breakers of His behests, have rallied to His Standard, and risen with one accord to carry on the great Work He has entrusted to their charge. All-hail to that undying Spirit of Fidelity which burns, and shall burn unceasingly, in the breasts of His loved ones! Great shall be their reward, and blissful the hour, when after a toilsome life of service, they are gathered to the glory of Bahá, and partake in their Beloved's Presence, of the joy of eternal Reunion.

...

And as the progress and extension of spiritual activities is dependent and conditioned upon material means, it is of absolute necessity that immediately after the establishment of Local as well as National Spiritual Assemblies, a Bahá'í Fund be established, to be placed under the exclusive control of the Spiritual Assembly. All donations and contributions should be offered to the Treasurer of the Assembly, for the express purpose of promoting the interests of the Cause, throughout that locality or country. It is the sacred obligation of every conscientious and faithful servant of Bahá'u'lláh, who desires to see His Cause advance, to contribute freely and generously for the increase of that Fund. The members of the Spiritual Assembly will at their own discretion expend it to promote the Teaching Campaign, to help the needy, to establish educational Bahá'í institutions, to extend in every way possible their sphere of service. I cherish the hope that all the friends, realizing the necessity of this measure, will bestir themselves and contribute, however modestly at first, towards the speedy establishment and the increase of that Fund.

Comments

No comments.

March 12. On this date in 1923, as an addendum to his letter to Western Bahá'ís, Shoghi Effendi wrote about the "Transliteration of Bahá'í Terms" noting a "list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated..."

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 12. On this date in 1923, as an addendum to his letter to Western Bahá'ís (also here), Shoghi Effendi wrote about the "Transliteration of Bahá'í Terms" (also here) noting a "list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated, the faithful spelling of which by all the Western friends will avoid confusion in future, and insure in this matter a uniformity which is greatly needed at present in all Bahá'í literature."

> Transliteration of Bahá'í Terms
>
> P.S. On another page [The complete list of terms is to be found in Bahá'í World, volume VII.] is given the list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated, the faithful spelling of which by all the Western friends will avoid confusion in future, and insure in this matter a uniformity which is greatly needed at present in all Bahá'í literature. The full code will be duly communicated to the various National Assemblies, and the transliteration of the Oriental terms mentioned in the English letters sent out by the Haifa Spiritual Assembly will provide a correct and reliable supplement to the above-mentioned list. I feel confident that all the friends will from now on follow this system and adhere scrupulously and at all times to this code in all their writings.

The Bahá'í orthography used to transcribe Arabic and Persian words into Latin script

relies on a system that was formally introduced by Shoghi Effendi in a letter dated March 20, 1925 noting "the transliteration of the Oriental terms mentioned in the English letters sent out by the Haifa Spiritual Assembly will provide a correct and reliable supplement to the above-mentioned list."

This system is highly defective, however.

Consider the very name of the religion itself: "Bahá'í"

The accent and phonemic diacritic marks in the word "Bahá'í" indicate a three syllable pronunciation as [bæhɒːˈʔiː].

However, the official pronunciation guide of the Bahá'í World News Service gives a two syllable pronunciation of " *Ba-HIGH* ," /bəˈhaɪ/.

The exact realization of the English pronunciation varies according to other sources. The *Oxford English Dictionary* has /bæˈhɑːiː/ *ba-HAH-ee* . *Merriam-Webster* has /bɑːˈhɑːiː/ *bah-HAH-ee* . The *Random House Dictionary* has /bəˈhɑːiː/ *bə-HAH-ee* . These three dictionaries all give a pronounciation with three syllables. For more discussion, please see Banani, Amin, *A Baha'i Glossary and Pronunciation Guide* (MP3), Bahá'i Study and Shahrokh, Darius, *"Windows to the Past Series" , Bahá'i Library* – A Guide to Pronunciation part 1 and 2, for more pronunciation instructions.

The defectiveness of Shoghi Effendi's orthography is also evidenced in the manner with which major encyclopedias spell the word "Bahá'u'lláh." For example, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* has an article about " Bahāʾ Allāh " and the

Encyclopædia Iranica has an article about " Bahāʾ-Allāh ."

Form many other words, the Bahá'í orthographic transliteration can often differ markedly from more common standard transliterations presently in use...

Bahá'í Orthography	Standard Transliteration	Persian pronunciation	Arabic pronunciation	Perso-Arabic Spelling
Ádhirbáyján	Azerbaijan	[ɒzeɾbɒːjˈdʒɒːn]	[ʔæðeɾbiːˈdʒæːn]	آذربایجان

Bahá'í Orthography	Standard Transliteration	Persian pronunciation	Arabic pronunciation	Perso-Arabic Spelling
Fátimih	Fatima	[fɒːteˈme]	[fɑːˈtˤɪmæ, ˈfɑːtˤɪmæ]	فاطمه
Shoghí	Shawki	[ˈʃoːɣi]	[ˈʃæwʔi, ˈʃɑwqi]	شوقی
Siyyid	Sayyid	[sejˈjed]	[ˈsæjjɪd]	سید

Comments

No comments.

March 12. On this date in 1983, Yad'u'llah Mahmudnizhad, father of Mona Mahmudnizhad, was executed.

Published on: March 10, 2026

March 12. On this date in 1983, Yad'u'llah Mahmudnizhad, father of Mona Mahmudnizhad , was executed.

Yad'u'llah and Farkhundeh Mahmudnizhad were Bahá'í pioneers in Sana'a , Yemen, when Mona was born to them on September 10, 1965. They returned to Iran when the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen expelled all foreigners in 1969. Yad'u'llah was a Secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Shiraz and in 1981 had been appointed an Auxiliary Board Member for the Province of Pars . Mona, being a member of the Bahá'í Education Committee, was arrested along with her father and other leading Bahá'ís of Shiraz on October 23, 1982. Mona's father was executed on March 12, 1983, and Mona was executed on June 18, 1983.

The collective arrest and subsequent execution of the Shiraz Bahá'í leadership became a *cause célèbre* . Mona Mahmudnizhad herself has become the subject of several hagiographic works, including a book, *The Story of Mona:1965-1983* ; a music video, *Mona With the Children* ; a play, *A Dress for Mona* ; and a movie, *Mona's Dream*

Punitive sanction for thoughtcrimes , whether by civil authorities or religious hierarchies, is reprehensible. While I abhor persecution and condemn it, I am skeptical of the hagiographic perspective of the Bahá'í martyrs. There are a number of reasons for my skepticism...

(1) In the community I was a member of, even in the lifetime of Khomeini , there were Iranian Bahá'ís who would regularly travel to Iran during their summer holidays to visit family. When I would ask them how that was possible, their response was always along the lines that the arrested Bahá'ís were those who were administratively and politically active, almost to the point of referring to them as "troublemakers."

I question the degree to which simply "being Bahá'í" was and is criminalized in Iran if

individual Bahá'ís could so readily travel for leisure purposes.

(2) The reasons the Bahá'í Administrative Order gives for Bahá'í persecutions lend themselves to doubt. For example, *The Story of Mona:1965-1983* recounts an interrogation...

> The Assistant to the Public Prosecutor said, 'You are accused of being a member of the Zionist movement, who are spies.' In reply, I told him that Baha'is have nothing to do with politics. On the other hand, the state of Israel was founded only 32 years ago, while the Baha'i Faith was founded 139 years ago. We only have spiritual organizations which have nothing to do with politics. He said, 'There remains only one way for you, you should either recant the Faith or you will be executed.' I said I would rather be executed."

Later, in a court appearance, the book quotes a judge telling Mona, "You are accused of misleading youth with your beautiful voice and chanting."

These reasons appear absurd, but they are not dissimilar to reasons given, for example, for the arrest of Bahá'ís in Yemen in a Bahá'í World News Service article from April 21, 2017 ...

> The baseless and nonsensical accusations levelled against the Baha'is include showing kindness and displaying rectitude of conduct in order to attract people to their Faith.

I question the reasons recounted for Bahá'í arrests in official publications of the Bahá'í Administrative Order .

(3) As dismissive as many Bahá'ís are regarding accusations of their coreligionists' being tied to national intelligence agencies, the examples are plenty. Perhaps the most famous example that comes to mind is that of David Kelly , a Bahá'í employed by the British Ministry of Defence who served as a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, providing intelligence of Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction in the lead up to the Iraq War . David Kelly's suspicious death by suicide subsequent to his appearance before the British House of Commons'

Foreign Intelligence Committee in 2003 was famously investigated by the Hutton Inquiry.

Bahá'ís often lament their being associated with Zionism for no other reason than the presence of the Bahá'í World Centre in Israel, which is a coincidence resulting from Bahá'u'lláh's ultimate exile to Acre, then a prison city in Ottoman Palestine, subsequent to internecine fighting between Bahá'ís and Azalis in Adrianople.

However, the Bahá'í connection to Zionism is not merely conspiratorial.

On February 23, 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, a member of the Rothschild banking family who was a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips to Palestine. This event was reported in "Star of the West" magazine.

On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement, proclaiming that "There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

Shoghi Effendi had a close relationship with Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. This relationship is alluded to in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, in the chapters titled *The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Its Immediate Consequences* and *The Heart and Nerve Centre* As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Bahá'í Administrative Order had close relations with the new government, facilitating the acquisition of numerous properties. For example, on November 12, 1952, a cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi

announced the "acquisition of vitally-needed property" of the Mansion of Bahji and the area around it from " the Development Authority of the State of Israel ...The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners ."

The Universal House of Justice has continued to have close connections with some of the most right-wing elements of the Israeli political establishment, such as [Moshe Sharon], who is Professor Emeritus of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he serves as Chair in Bahá'í Studies. Moshe Sharon holds some very extreme views .

I question the degree to which Bahá'ís are dismissive of their co-religionists' and Administrative Order's association with state actors.

I question the degree to which individual Bahá'ís may, in fact, be in the service of various national intelligence agencies.

(4) Bahá'i writings clearly forbid disobedience to one's government unless it involves the renunciation of faith. For example, Soviet policies targeted Bahá'í institutions and administrative structures . On January 1, 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later included in his seminal book *Bahá'í Administration* with sections titled "Persecutions in Russia" and "Guiding Principle of Conduct" . Shoghi Effendi stated...

> the varied and numerous Bahá'í institutions established in the past by heroic pioneers of the Faith have been brought into direct and sudden contact with the internal convulsions necessitated by the establishment and maintenance of an order so fundamentally at variance with Russia's previous regime. The avowed purpose and action of the responsible heads of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics who, within their recognized and legitimate rights, have emphatically proclaimed and vigorously pursued their policy of uncompromising opposition to all forms of organized religious propaganda, have by their very nature created for those whose primary obligation is to labor unremittingly for the spread of the Bahá'í Faith a state of affairs that is highly unfortunate and perplexing...
>
> our Bahá'í brethren in those provinces have had to endure the rigid

application of the principles already enunciated by the state authorities and universally enforced with regard to all other religious communities under their sway. Faithful to their policy of expropriating in the interests of the State all edifices and monuments of a religious character, they have a few months ago approached the Bahá'í representatives in Turkistan, and after protracted negotiations with them, decided to claim and enforce their right of ownership and control of that most cherished and universally prized Bahá'í possession, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Ishqábád…

To these measures which the State, in the free exercise of its legitimate rights, has chosen to enforce, and with which the Bahá'ís, as befits their position as loyal and law-abiding citizens, have complied, others have followed which though of a different character are none the less grievously affecting our beloved Cause. In Baku, the seat of the Soviet Republic of Caucasus, as well as in Ganjih and other neighboring towns, state orders, orally and in writing, have been officially communicated to the Bahá'í Assemblies and individual believers, suspending all meetings, commemoration gatherings and festivals, suppressing the committees of all Bahá'í local and national Spiritual Assemblies, prohibiting the raising of funds and the transmission of financial contributions to any center within or without Soviet jurisdiction, requiring the right of full and frequent inspection of the deliberations, decisions, plans and action of the Bahá'í Assemblies, dissolving young men's clubs and children's organizations, imposing a strict censorship on all correspondence to and from Bahá'í Assemblies, directing a minute investigation of Assemblies' papers and documents, suspending all Bahá'í periodicals, bulletins and magazines, and requiring the deportation of leading personalities in the Cause whether as public teachers and speakers or officers of Bahá'í Assemblies…

To all these the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have with feelings of burning agony and heroic fortitude unanimously and unreservedly submitted, ever mindful of the guiding principles of Bahá'í conduct that in connection with their administrative activities, no matter how grievously interference with them might affect the course of the extension of the

> Movement, and the suspension of which does not constitute in itself a departure from the principle of loyalty to their Faith, the considered judgment and authoritative decrees issued by their responsible rulers must, if they be faithful to Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's express injunctions, be thoroughly respected and loyally obeyed...
>
> Clinging with immovable resolution to the inviolable verities of their cherished Faith, our sorely-tried brethren in Caucasus and Turkistan have none the less, as befits law-abiding Bahá'í citizens resolved, after having exhausted every legitimate means for the alleviation of the restrictions imposed upon them, to definitely uphold and conscientiously carry out the considered judgment of their recognized government.

I question why obedience to one's government, particularly in terms of disestablishing the Bahá'í administrative hierarchy and halting teaching activities, was readily acquiesced to in the past in the Soviet Union but resisted in more modern times in Iran and Yemen.

(5) The Bahá'í Administrative Order uses news stories of persecution very astutely to generate media attention. A Google News search for the term "Bahá'í" shows a predominance of news stories regarding Bahá'í temples and discrimination. Otherwise, the Bahá'í Faith generates little to no interest.

Shoghi Effendi himself realized the degree of media attention generated by the construction of the Chicago Temple. In a letter dated June 13, 1956 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, he stated...

> Repercussions of the Chicago Temple are felt everywhere, and the same is becoming increasingly true of the Shrine . One single edifice, raised to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh, shines like a beacon and attracts the hearts of the people; no doubt many seeds are sown just through the act of people visiting these edifices - seeds which in the future will germinate. It is because of this that he is very eager to have the Australian one commenced as soon as circumstances permit.

I question the degree to which stories of Bahá'í persecution are used to generate

media attention.

(6) Despite their rightly condemning persecution for belief, what is further interesting to me, given my past, is the degree to which the Bahá'í Administrative Order itself roots out dissent within its own ranks. Without going into further detail, I will refer you to two articles by Juan Cole, one entitled *The Baha'i Faith in America as Panopticon, 1963-1997* and the other titled *Fundamentalism in the Contemporary U.S. Baha'i Community*.

I question what form and magnitude this behavior would take if the Bahá'í Faith ever became, as Shoghi Effendi described...

> the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power...will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise, as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth, all the rights, the duties, and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future super-state.

Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1986, a letter written on behalf of the UHJ quoted Shoghi Effendi, "When Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet."

Published on: March 11, 2026

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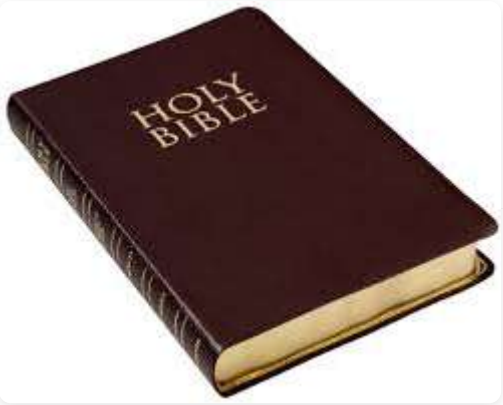
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer and cited on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, March 13, 1986 in a letter to a believer)



Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1945, Siyyid Mustafá Rúmí, posthumously named a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi, was killed by a mob in a village in the Kungyangon district of Burma.

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Siyyid Mustafá Rumi was born in Baghdad, but his family moved to Madras, India while he was a child. He first encountered the Baha'i Faith in 1876 through Jamal Effendi, and became a Baha'i in Calcutta late in 1877. In May 1878, he traveled to Burma with Jamal Effendi.

In the late 1800's the Burmese Baha'i community constructed a sarcophagus for the Báb, and in 1899 Siyyid Mustafa brought it to the Holy Land where he presented it to 'Abdu'l-Baha. The remains of the Báb were placed in the sarcophagus in 1909. He traveled to the Dutch East Indies with Jamal Effendi in the 1880's, and the two converted the King and Queen of Boné in Celebes on the journey. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma in the late 1930's. Siyyid Mustafa was invited to live in the village of Daidanaw by the headman of the village, who had learnt about the Faith from two Baha'is who had vouched for him in a legal dispute. He converted approximately 800 residents of Daidanaw to the Baha'i Faith and established a school there. In his later years he translated the Kitab-i-Iqan, The Hidden Words and Some Answered Questions into Burmese, and the Maoala-i-Sayyah into Urdu.

In 1945 a mob of 3000 nationalists attacked foreigners in Daidanaw, destroying many Baha'i properties and murdering eleven Baha'is including Siyyid Mustafa.

On July 14, 1945 Shoghi Effendi posthumously named him a Hand of the Cause sending the following cablegram :

“Hearts griefstricken passing Supreme Concourse distinguished pioneer Faith Baha’u’llah, dearly beloved staunch high minded noble soul Siyyid Mustafa. Long record his superb services (in) both teaching (and) administrative fields shed lustre on both heroic and formative ages (of) Baha’i Dispensation. His magnificent achievements fully entitle him join ranks (of the) Hands of (the) Cause (of) Baha’u’llah. His resting place should be regarded foremost shrine (in the) community of Burmese believers Advise holding (of) memorial gatherings throughout India (to) his imperishable memory. Urge Indian (and) Burmese Baba’is participate construction (of his) tomb. Cabling three hundred pounds (as) my personal contribution (for) so praiseworthy (a) purpose.”

Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Moslems and Christians are forming a religious front against a common foe - Communism. They join in an unholy alliance....They cannot even think clearly - they are confused, they are afraid...The U.S. is afraid..."

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March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Moslems are exerting a very great effort in America - allying themselves with the Christians - they are not sincere - but compromise their principles. The building of the Mosque in Washington D.C. is a direct result from our building the Temple. Diplomats and Ambassadors from the East, from Egypt - went back and told their people - if the few Bahá'ís can build such a beautiful Temple - why can't we of the Moslem world do better. They will do everything they can to attract people - but they compromise their principles. Even to the extent of forming ties with the Christians - even with the Catholics, their bitter enemies. To Bahá'ís, principles are first, popularity second. The Moslems and Christians are forming a religious front against a common foe - Communism. They join in an unholy alliance. The Pope is inviting the Egyptians and Moslems to help in the fight against the common foe - Communism. All are compromising their principles. Their fundamental beliefs are directly opposed to one another. The American government is glad to see the alliance - anything to consolidate their ranks. They have all been besieged by fear - fear has entered then and they don't know where to turn. They cannot even think clearly - they are confused, they are afraid. They call it the "barbarian from the East" - a "history repeating itself" they are losing their balance - fear seizes them. Of course, this does not mean that Communism is good. The U.S. is afraid - none more afraid than they, the richer the state - the more afraid. The poorer - the less afraid. The old order is dying - the New Order is not yet born. The Administrative Order is not the World Order - one is the embryo of the other. Now we have the embryo. The world must be organized and spiritualized - a

spiritualization of mankind. Now the world suffers from organization and materialism."

Comments

No comments.

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Comments

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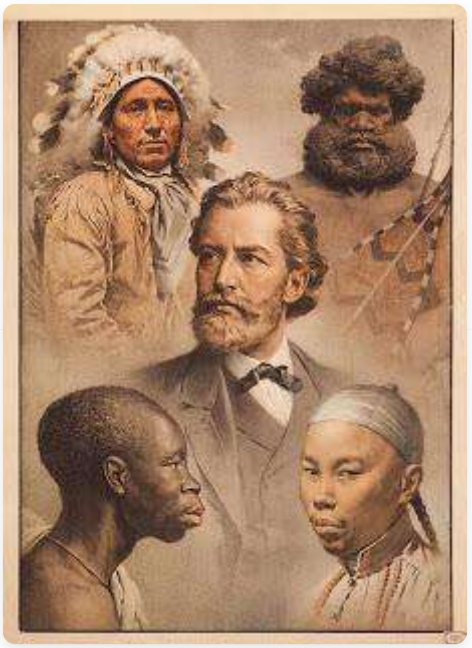
March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said of the Islands of the South Pacific. "There we must have the greatest concentration of effort. There the islands are scattered - numerous - backward - and are virgin territories. Look at Europe, look at America - there aren't many places which haven't been at some time opened to the Faith or established there, - but in the islands of the South Pacific there are hundreds of virgin territories. They are inhabited by the Brown Race. They are very important, very promising. the Cause has been revealed to the white, the yellow and black - but little amongst the brown."



Comments

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March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Tibet is the roof of the world...It is very difficult for the Cause there. It has a theocratic government - a government run by monks. It is a stronghold of religious orthodoxy - a stronghold of the Buddhist Faith. It will be difficult to …."

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Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "The Portrait of the Bab will be shown in Stockholm. You must tell the German friends about this - for it will act as a stimulus for them to attend. The Portrait of the Bab is to be shown at Wilmette, then Stockholm, and also at New Delhi in ..."

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Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1912, Robert Quigley was born in New York City. He served on the NSAs of South Africa and of the U.S. and as an Auxiliary Board member for Africa. He collaborated with William Sears to produce audio-visual material, books, plays, and films related to the Bahá'í Faith.

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Robert Quigley was born into a Roman Catholic family on March 13, 1912. He was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Philip Sprague in New York when he was 19 and was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of New York when he was 21. In 1941 he married Keith Gettinger who he introduced to the Faith and they had three children. He enlisted in the US Navy in a non-combat role during WWII and served for three and a half years. He and Keith founded a television production company after he was discharged from the Navy. Robert wrote for the television programs College of Musical Knowledge in 1950 and Star of the Family in 1952. He also wrote for comedian and pianist Victor Borge.

In May 1956 Robert and his wife went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he met Shoghi Effendi. A photograph of Robert and Keith in Haifa was published in the Westport Town Crier & Herald in June 1956. He decided to pioneer to South Africa while in the Holy Land to join his friends William and Marguerite Sears. In July 1956 a program on the Faith that Robert had written with William Sears was broadcast on WTTV, a non-commercial television station in Chicago. It included footage of the 1953 Dedication of the US House of Worship and footage of Robert interviewing Horace Holley.

Robert arrived in Africa in early 1957, and was joined by his family shortly afterwards. He visited Zululand with William Sears and two African Bahá'ís to visit an isolated pioneer shortly after arriving in Africa. Sears wrote the following regarding the trip:

> "In order that we should not lose any teaching time, we took two of the African believers with us. In this way we had three hours of teaching on the way over, and three on the way back. Mr. Quigley rented the car and drove, and I sat and taught the boys. It was a thrilling trip for all of us, Mr. Quigley joining in on the teaching whenever he didn't have to duck a giant hole in the appalling roads."

The Quigleys lived in Johannesburg for four years with Robert serving on the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa and Auxiliary Board of Africa during their time there.

Robert resumed his career in television production after returning to the US in 1960 founding a production company with Merrill Heatter, Heatter-Quigley Productions, and they began developing game shows, most of which only ran for a short time. They were among the first to work on game shows after the 1950s rigged game show scandals, with Video Village being the first game show bought by CBS since the scandals.

Robert was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States as vice-chairman in 1963 and served on the body until 1968. In September 1963 he chaired a Baltimore World Peace Day Program. In February 1964 he gave a talk on the Faith in Africa attended by 200 Bahá'ís in Chicago, and in June 1964 he chaired a Race Amity Day observance in California. In 1965 he spoke on the impact of the Faith in Africa at a public talk in Evanston, Illinois. In June 1965 he taught at a Geyserville Youth Training Session and in September 1965 Robert and Keith hosted a Youth Victory Day celebration at their home in Beverly Hills. As of 1966 Robert was serving as Chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Beverly Hills.

In 1965 Robert created the game show Hollywood Squares with Merrill Heatter. It was passed on by CBS, but picked up by NBC, and Heatter and Quigley served as its executive producers from 1966 to 1980. In 1969 they produced a children's version of

the program called Storybook Squares. They were nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Daytime Programming for the program in 1969, 1972, and 1973, and for the Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Game Show in 1974. They were awarded the Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Game or Audience Participation Show for Hollywood Squares in 1975, 1978, 1979 and 1980, and were nominated for it in 1976, 1977, and 1981.

In 1968 Quigley and Heatter collaborated with Hanna and Barbera, planning to incorporate animated segments into a game show, the idea was abandoned but Quigley and Heatter received a production credit on Wacky Races which came from the idea. They continued to develop new game shows throughout the 1970's in addition to producing Hollywood Squares, the most notable of which were Gambit and High Rollers, game shows based on blackjack and dice rolling respectively. Robert retired in 1981.

Robert died on November 27, 1989 and was buried in Inglewood Cemetery, California, near the grave of Thornton Chase . The Universal House of Justice cabled the following after his death:

> DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING DEARLY LOVED ROBERT QUIGLEY. PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL HIS LONG YEARS CONSTANT DEVOTION CAUSE BAHA'U'LLAH DISTINGUISHED BY HIS OUTSTANDING, SACRIFICIAL SERVICES AS PIONEER AFRICA TOGETHER WITH HAND OF THE CAUSE WILLIAM SEARS AND HIS MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES. HUMOR WITH WHICH HE ENCOURAGED SERVICE AND LIGHTENED BURDENS OTHERS WARMLY REMEMBERED. ARDENTLY PRAYING PROGRESS

Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 2002, Elena Maria Marsella died in Kailua, Hawaii. She was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Gilbert and Ellice Islands with her husband, Roy Fernie and served on the NSA of Central America and the Antilles, on the NSA of Hawaii, and as a Counsellor for Northeast Asia

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 13. On this date in 2002, Elena Maria Marsella died of a heart attack in Kailua, Hawaii. She was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands with her husband, Roy Fernie and served as Secretary of the NSA of the Bahá'ís of Central America and the Antilles, on the NSA of Hawaii, and as a Counsellor for Northeast Asia.

Elena Maria Marsella was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in August 1913. She became a concert pianist in Boston, and later joined the U.S. Foreign Service. Elena became a Bahá'í in 1939, and began travelling to teach the Faith in 1945, first visiting the Dominican Republic, and pioneering to Ciudad Trujillo with Ofelia Montalvo that year. In Trujillo she taught a study class, and all six members of the class declared as Bahá'ís in 1947. She also visited Santiago to teach the Faith that year. In 1951 she was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Central America, Mexico, and the Antilles. She was also appointed to the Central American Teaching Committee, moving to Panama City to serve on both bodies. In 1952 she was elected Secretary of the National Assembly.

In 1953 she married Roy Fernie , and together they pioneered to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1954, being named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh . She was appointed as an Auxiliary Board member for Asia in 1954. Due to opposition to the Faith from local Catholics Roy was forced to leave the islands, however Elena was able to remain until 1956 when Francis Heller pioneered to the islands allowing her to join her husband in Hawaii. From 1958 to 1964 she traveled the Pacific extensively as an Auxiliary Board

member. In 1964 Elena was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, and also to the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Koolaupoka Oahu. Roy died later that year, on October 21, 1964, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In 1969 Elena visited Alaska where she taught at the Juneau Summer School on Great Religions of the Past.

In 1973 Elena was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for Northeast Asia, which was responsible for Hawaii. In July 1973 she taught at a Tainan Bahá'í Teaching Institute. In 1974 she attended the Bahá'í International Youth Conference which was held in Hawaii, moderating a discussion on pioneering. In 1975 she gave a talk on Agnes Alexander at an International Women's Year Banquet held in Honolulu. She also attended the 1975 Hawaiian Bahá'í Convention in Honolulu. In December 1976 Elena attended a dinner commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith in Hawaii in Honolulu. She attended the 1979 Hawaiian Bahá'í Convention. She helped launch a Hawaii teaching campaign in June of 1980. Her service as Counsellor ended in 1980.

Elena Maria Marsella died in Kailua, Hawaii, after suffering a heart attack.

Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1847, Helen Goodall, later a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born. In 1908 she had made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908."

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 13. On this date in 1847, Helen Goodall , Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá , was born. In 1908 she had made a pilgrimage with her daughter to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Acre. They would later write a book about this visit, titled *Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908* .

The book contains many observations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's household, daily routine and other visitors. The ladies also chronicle some of the lessons they received, such as this recounting of the *Exile of Bahá'u'lláh* by Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali...

> When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.
>
> Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.

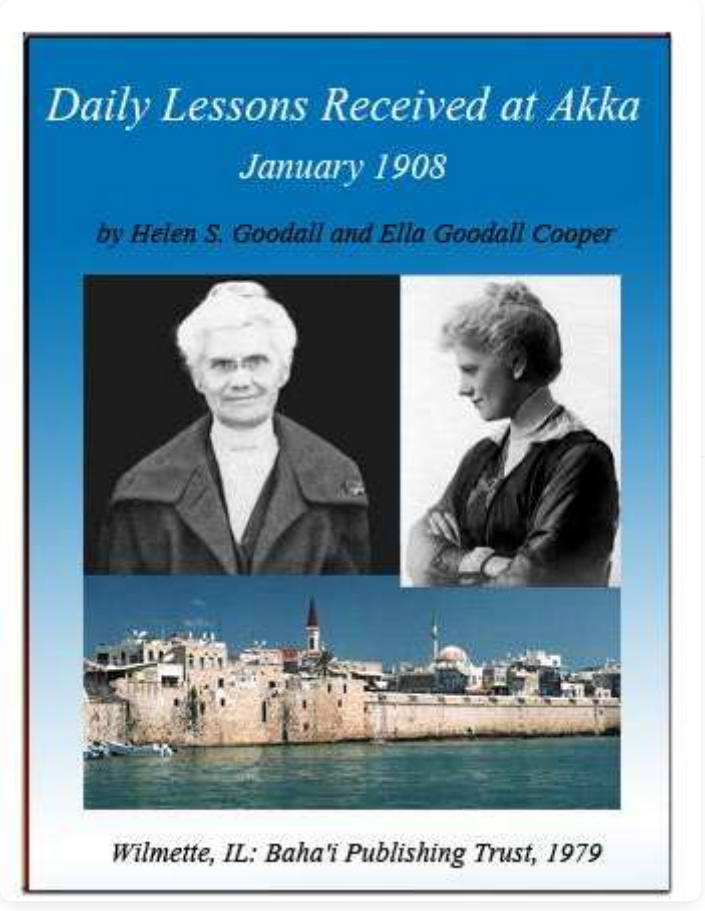
The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.

The book also describes in the chapter titled *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH* their impressions on viewing the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh

THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH

The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy Bab and Bahá'u'lláh was accorded us just before we left Akka.

This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty is the only one in existence. How perfectly that noble Face and Form embody the Words, "The King has come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler of the Throne and of the dust!" and at the same time express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and Love.


Daily Lessons Received at Akka
January 1908
by Helen S. Goodall and Ella Goodall Cooper
Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1979

Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your questions: We cannot possibly add names of people we (or anyone else) think might be Lesser Prophets to those found in the Qur'an, the Bible and our own Scriptures. For only these can we consider authentic Books."

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> 1696. Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism (Following are some quotations taken from a compilation of extracts from letters written on behalf of the Guardian on these and related subjects, enclosed with a letter to an individual believer on November 30, 1980 from the Universal House of Justice)
>
> Lesser Prophets: "Regarding your questions: We cannot possibly add names of people we (or anyone else) think might be Lesser Prophets to those found in the Qur'an, the Bible and our own Scriptures. For only these can we consider authentic Books."
>
> (March 13, 1950, to an individual believer)
>
> Asiatic Prophets: "Regarding your questions: The only reason there is not more mention of the Asiatic prophets is because their names seem to be lost in the mists of ancient history. Buddha is mentioned and Zoroaster in our scriptures--both non-Jewish prophets or non-semitic prophets. We are taught there always have been Manifestations of God, but we do not have any record of their names."

(October 4, 1950, to an individual believer)

Scriptures of Buddha and Krishna: "We cannot be sure of the authenticity of the scriptures of Buddha and Krishna, so we certainly cannot draw any conclusions about virgin births mentioned in them. There is no reference to this subject in our teachings, so the Guardian cannot pronounce an opinion.

"As our teachings do not state Zoroaster is the connecting link between the Euphrates and the Prophets in India, we cannot assert this.

"Abraham and Krishna are two separate individuals, with no connection that we know of.

"We know no more about the prophets mentioned in the Iqan than what Bahá'u'lláh states in that Book."

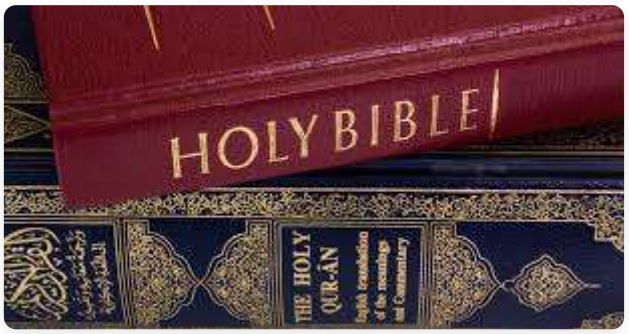
(November 25, 1950, to an individual believer)

Brahma and Krishna: "Your question concerning Brahma and Krishna: Such matters, as no reference occurs to them in the Teachings, are left for students of history and religion to resolve and clarify."

(April 14, 1941, to an individual believer)

Actual Dates of Prophets of Adamic Cycle Not Given: "There are no dates in our teachings regarding the actual dates of the Prophets of the Adamic Cycle, so we cannot give any. Tentatively we can accept what historians may consider accurate. Naturally the dates referring to Muhammad, the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh we are sure of."

(November 25, 1950, to an individual believer)



Comments

No comments.

March 13. On this date in 1925, the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims from Australia and New Zealand arrived in Haifa. The party consisted of Effie Baker, Margaret Stevenson, and the Blundells (Sarah, Ethel, and Hugh)

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 13. On this date in 1925, the first group of Bahá'í pilgrims from Australia and New Zealand arrived in Haifa . The party consisted of Effie Baker , Margaret Stevenson, and the Blundells (Sarah, Ethel, and Hugh).

Effie Baker was an Australian photographer who became a follower of the Bahá'í Faith in 1922. Some of the pictures she took of the Bahá'í monuments in Iraq and Iran were included in Shoghi Effendi's translation of Nabíl-i-A`zam 's The Dawn-Breakers . On September 3, 1892, a few months after Bahá'u'lláh's death, Nabíl-i-A'ẓam , the author of *The Dawn-breakers* , died. Parts of his body and clothing were found washed up on the coast in Acre. While Bahá'í sources attribute his death to suicide, other sources claim he was murdered.

Sources that allege Nabíl-i-A'ẓam was murdered base their claim on the allegation that he became a victim due to his support of Mírzá Muhammad `Alí in his conflict with 'Abdu'l-Bahá ...

> According to the memoirs of Baha's son Mirza Badiullah surnamed the Most Luminous Branch (غصن انور) by Baha : One year after Baha 's death, Nabil visited Badiullah in Haifa. He was distressed. Nabil said to Badiullah : "I can no longer stay at Acre. The situation there has deteriorated. By dint of violence, abusive language and cursing, one has to act against his own faith, has to regard and hold the Most Mighty Branch [Ghusn-i Azam , i.e. Abdul Baha Abbas] superior in station to the Blessed Beauty [Janab-i Mubarak , i.e. Baha] has to write corrupted [versions of] all the holly writings and epistles, and has to vilify and excommunicate [Baha's] sons,

[Baha's] words and [Baha's] family [i.e. all the members of Baha's household in opposition to Abdul Baha Abbas], failing which one is branded as covenant-breaker [Naqiz] or Vacillator [Mutezalzil, i.e. opposed to Abdul Baha Abbas and partisan of Muhammad Ali] and becomes the object of untold calumnies and falsehoods." **Nabil requested Badiullah to find him a suitable room at the foot of Mount Carmel. He went back to Acre to fetch his things. Nothing was heard of him for sometime. Later "limbs of his body and his clothing" were discovered near the see shores at Acre. These were collated together and buried. Abdul Baha Abbas "shed crocodile tears" during the burial service of Nabil , "although he was exceedingly annoyed with him."**

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled "NABIL-E AʿẒAM ZARANDI, MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD" ...

Comments

No comments.

March 14. On this date in 1980, the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper published a letter from Swiss ex-Bahá'í Francesco Ficicchia. In 1995 Udo Schaefer authored "Desinformation als Methode" as a refutation to Ficicchia's "Der Bahá'ismus".

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 14. On this date in 1980, the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper published a letter from Swiss ex-Bahá'í Francesco Ficicchia. In 1995 Udo Schaefer, German Bahá'í author and lawyer who served on the NSA of Germany, authored *Desinformation als Methode* as a refutation to Francesco Ficicchia's *Der Bahá'ismus — Weltreligion der Zukunft?*. Although *Der Bahá'ismus* was never translated into English, Schaefer's *Desinformation als Methode* was published in 2001 in English as *Making the Crooked Straight*, which was reviewed by Denis MacEoin.

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

7 May 1980

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 14 April 1980 enclosing the copy of that part of page 15 of the issue of the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung for 14 March 1980, on which the letter from Francesco Ficicchia was published.

The House of Justice feels that the best course is to ignore this disgraceful attack on the Faith, rather than to make any rebuttal. Your Assembly should, however, be prepared to answer any enquiries that you may receive as a result of this article, whether from Bahá'ís or non-Bahá'ís. To assist you in this, we enclose extracts from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, which touch on matters

raised by Mr. Ficicchia. You are also, no doubt, aware that a Russian translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by A. G. Tumansky was published in 1899. A translation of the complete text into English, made by two former Presbyterian missionaries in Iran, was published by The Royal Asiatic Society in 1961; it is accompanied by highly prejudiced and misleading footnotes and introduction, and the inadequacy of the translation itself is immediately apparent to anyone who compares passages with those that Shoghi Effendi translated. The exisence of these two published translations, however, demonstrates the falsity of Ficicchia's statement that no complete translation exists. A far clearer understanding of the contents of the Most Holy Book, however, than given by either translation, is presented in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which gives not only the laws of the Aqdas themselves, but also includes the elucidations given by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in the "Questions and Answers," and contains many explanatory annotation provided by the House of Justice.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

27 May 1980

Extracts from a reply written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to questions about the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

The institution of the Covenant has a direct bearing on the implementation of the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. This Book is the repository of the basic laws for the Dispensation to be implemented gradually in accordance with the guidance given by God through those infallible Institutions which lie at the heart of the Covenant. Indeed, one of those Institutions, the Universal House of Justice, has been given by Bahá'u'lláh the task not only of applying the laws but of supplementing them and of making laws on all matters not explicitly covered in the Sacred Text. An English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was made by Dr. Earl E. Elder and Dr. William McE. Miller, two men who were Presbyterian missionaries in Persia and have long been strongly antagonistic to the Faith. A great many of the statements that they make about its history are based on the assertions of Covenant-breakers or opponents of the Faith—rather like a history of Christianity based primarily on statements by enemies of Jesus

Christ. Dr. Miller, for example, places great reliance on a document called the "Nuqṭatu'l-Káf," which is, in fact, spurious, as is fully demonstrated by the Hand of the Cause Ḥasan Balyúzí in his book Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith.

The reasons for the delay in the translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are given in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself is the kernel of a vast structure of Bahá'í law that will have to come into being in the years and centuries ahead as the unity of mankind is established and develops. Thus to properly understand the contents of that Book one should also read many other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh relating to them, as well as the interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, and realize that great areas of detail have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to fill in and to vary in accordance with the needs of a developing society. For example:

1 The law of divorce in the Aqdas seems to apply only to a husband divorcing his wife, and not vice versa. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian have made it quite clear that the principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh in the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" applies equally to men and women, and the law has always been implemented in this way. Such elucidations are one of the specific functions intended by Bahá'u'lláh for the authoritative Interpreter.

2 The Kitáb-i-Aqdas appears to allow bigamy. This is explained in Note 17 on page 59 of the Synopsis and Codification: "The text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas upholds monogamy, but as it appears also to permit bigamy, the Guardian was asked for a clarification, and in reply his secretary wrote on his behalf: 'Regarding Bahá'í marriage: in the light of the Master's Tablet interpreting the provision in the Aqdas on the subject of the plurality of wives, it becomes evident that monogamy alone is permissible, since, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, bigamy is conditioned upon justice and as justice is impossible, it follows that bigamy is not permissible, and monogamy alone should be practiced.'"

This is an authoritative interpretation, and as an interpretation states what is intended by the original text, it is correct to say that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas prohibits plurality of wives. This method of establishing monogamy as the law of the Faith is one example of the process referred to in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification whereby there is a progressive disclosure of the full meaning of the laws of the Faith as the Dispensation unfolds.

3 The punishments prescribed for theft, murder and arson are given only in barest outline. It is explained in Note 42 on page 64 of the Synopsis and Codification that these punishments are intended for a future condition of society and will have to be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice. The punishment for theft, for example, says that for the third offense a mark must be placed on the thief's forehead (nothing is said about branding), so that people will be warned of his proclivities. All details of how the mark is to be applied, how long it must be worn, on what conditions it may be removed, as well as the seriousness of various degrees of theft have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to decide when the law has to be applied. Similarly, merely the fundamental principles of the punishments for murder and arson are given in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Willful murder is to be punished either by capital punishment or life imprisonment. Such matters as degrees of offense and whether any extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account, and which of the two prescribed punishments is to be the norm are left to the Universal House of Justice to decide in light of prevailing conditions when the law is in operation. Arson, as you yourself can see from the newspapers, is becoming an increasingly frequent offense—scarcely a day passes without some building being burned or blown up, often causing agonizing death to innocent people. Bahá'u'lláh prescribes that a person who burns a house intentionally is to be burned or imprisoned for life, but again, the application of these punishments, the method of carrying them out and the fixing of degrees of offense are left to the Universal House of Justice. Obviously there is a tremendous difference in the degree of the offense of a person who burns down an empty warehouse from that of one who sets fire to a school full of children.

From the above examples it should be clear why a translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas made without proper comprehensive footnotes referring to other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh which elucidate His laws as well as to interpretations made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, can give a very misleading impression—quite apart from the problem of achieving a beauty of style in the English which can approach that of the original, an aspect in which the Elder-Miller translation falls woefully short.

Although there is no explicit reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the

Synopsis and Codification lists “Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship.” On page 214 of God Passes By, when summarizing the contents of the Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi states that in it Bahá’u’lláh “anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship,” and again, on page 147 of The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh the Guardian refers to “the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas the implications of which clearly anticipate the institution of the Guardianship.” One such implication is in the matter of Ḥuqúqu’lláh (The Right of God), which is ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas without provision being made for who is to receive it; in His Will and Testament ‘Abdu’l-Bahá fills this gap by stating “It is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God …” Other implications of this institution can be seen in the terms in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is appointed as the Successor of Bahá’u’lláh and the Interpreter of His Teachings. The faithful are enjoined to turn their faces towards the one whom “God hath purposed” and who “hath branched from this Ancient Root” and are bidden to refer whatsoever they do not understand in the Bahá’í writings to him who “hath branched from this mighty Stock.” Yet another can be seen in the provision of the Aqdas concerning the disposition of international endowments—a passage which not only refers this matter to the Aghṣán (male descendants of Bahá’u’lláh) but also provides for what should happen should the line of Aghṣán end before the coming into being of the Universal House of Justice. Thus the “Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship” is correctly included in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Comments

No comments.

March 14. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...it should not surprise the scientist that Abdu'l-Bahá states that copper can be transmuted into gold...The same holds true of the statement of Bahá'u'lláh in the Iqan, regarding transmutation of copper into gold after seventy years..."

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 14. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Considering that a century ago, nobody knew the nature of matter, and couldn't split any kind of an atom, it should not surprise the scientist that Abdu'l-Bahá states that copper can be transmuted into gold...The same holds true of the statement of Bahá'u'lláh in the Iqan, regarding transmutation of copper into gold after seventy years, under certain conditions."

> 1580. Copper Can Be Transmuted into Gold
>
> "Considering that a century ago, nobody knew the nature of matter, and couldn't split any kind of an atom, it should not surprise the scientist that Abdu'l-Bahá states that copper can be transmuted into gold.
>
> "There may come a time, for all we know, when the mass of many atoms can be changed by scientists. We have no way of proving or disproving at present the statement of Abdu'l-Bahá. Just because we cannot demonstrate a contention in the Bahá'í Teachings does not mean the contention is not true.
>
> "The same holds true of the statement of Bahá'u'lláh in the Iqan, regarding transmutation of copper into gold after seventy years, under certain conditions.
>
> "We as Bahá'ís must assume that, as He had access to all knowledge, He was referring to a definite physical condition which theoretically might exist. Because we don't know what this condition is in scientific terms does

not refute Bahá'u'lláh's statement at all.

"The Guardian hopes that Mr. ... will not let so small a thing stand in his path. The principle of Faith is to accept anything the Manifestation of God says, once you have accepted Him as being the Manifestation. That is really the crux of the whole matter. It is a question of confidence."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 14, 1955)

Comments

Ok-Leg9721:

I mean we *can* change elements into other elements using fusion/fission/ radioactive decay.

The problem is the end products are all low volume and, generally, *dangerously radioactive*. But that's better than not being able to do this

March 14. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote ".... Most Great Peace... by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í super-state...."

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 14. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "With reference to the question you have asked concerning the time and means through which the Lesser and Most Great Peace, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, will be established, following the coming World War. Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í super-state--your view on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in the 'Unfoldment of World Civilization' ."

> 1412. The Time and Means Through which the Lesser and the Most Great Peace Will Be Established
>
> "With reference to the question you have asked concerning the time and means through which the Lesser and Most Great Peace, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, will be established, following the coming World War. Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í super-state--your view

on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in the 'Unfoldment of World Civilization' ."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 14, 1939)

Comments

No comments.

March 14. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "...it should not be so much a matter of whether a practicing homosexual can be a Bahá'í as whether, having become a Bahá'í, the homosexual can overcome his problem through knowledge of the teachings and reliance on Bahá'u'lláh."

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 14. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual stating "Bahá'í teachings on **sexual morality** centre on marriage and the family as the bedrock of the whole structure of human society and are designed to protect and strengthen that divine institution. Thus Bahá'í law restricts permissible sexual intercourse to that between a man and the woman to whom he is married. Thus, it should not be so much a matter of whether a practicing homosexual can be a Bahá'í as whether, having become a Bahá'í, **the homosexual can overcome his problem** through knowledge of the teachings and reliance on Bahá'u'lláh."

Comments

No comments.

March 14. On this date in 1981, Muhammad Labíb, a Bahá'í author, photographer, notable Esperantist, founder the Nawnahálán Company, and pioneer to Japan and Rhodes, died.

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 14. On this date in 1981, Muhammad Labíb , a Bahá'í author, photographer, notable Esperantist, founder the Nawnahálán Company, and pioneer to Japan and Rhodes, died.

Muhammad Labíb was born into a Bahá'í family in Yazd in 1893. Muhammad Labíb's father was Muhammad-Husayn Ulfat (known as 'Attár), a Shaykhí who converted to the Bahá'í Faith.

In 1905 he and his family moved to Tehran, where Labíb received an education at a Bahá'í school.

Labíb learned Esperanto in 1914 and later taught the language at the Bahá'í Tavakkul School in Qazvín. He also served as an official representative of the World Esperanto movement.

In the late 1910's Labíb founded the Nawnahálán Company . Muhammad asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá's permission to found the trust fund while on pilgrimage in 1919, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave Labíb His blessing, and also contributed two gold coins to the company. The company eventually received investments from many Bahá'ís in Iran, and moved to Tehran where it evolved into a national financial institution. The assets of the company were seized by the post-revolution government of Iran in February of 1979, and the company's offices were stormed later in the year.

Labíb accompanied Effie Baker on her journey to take photographs of important Bahá'í sites throughout Iran from 1930 to 1931. He also had the *Risalih-'i Siyasiyyih* , a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, published in Tehran in the early 1930's.

He pioneered to Hiroshima in 1955, and taught the faith in Japan for the next nine years. In 1961 he converted six people of Ainu ancestry who were leaders of the Ainu

community to the faith, which was an early breakthrough for the Faith in Japan. In 1963 he moved to the Greek island of Rhodes.

He wrote many books in his later life which included many photographs he had taken. Only one of his books, *The Seven Martyrs of Hurmuzak* , has been published in English.

Muhammad Labíb died on March 14, 1981.

On January 6, 1957, Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím sent a cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran, advising pioneers to "scatter to make new centers" and "not to gather in one place but to scatter in different places."

> To the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran
>
> Letter of January 6, 1957
>
> Regarding pioneers going to Japan , Brazil ... and other places, the beloved Guardian states that they must not gather in one place but scatter to make new centers, e.g., Mr. Assassi and his wife, and Mr. Labib who travelled to Japan must not stay in Tokyo but should go to places where there are no Bahá'ís, or very few Bahá'ís to make new centers. Furthermore (he) says that the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran must write to all pioneers that have left Iran for other parts of the world and instruct them not to gather in one place but to scatter in different places. He says that the matter stated above is very important... (translated from the original Persian)
>
> (signed by Dr. Hakim)

Comments

No comments.

March 14. On this date in 1914, Richard Nolen was born in Almont, Michigan. He would become a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Azores.

Published on: March 11, 2026

March 14. On this date in 1914, Richard Nolen was born in Almont, Michigan. He would become a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Azores.

Richard Nolen was born in Almont, Michigan on March 14, 1914. At the age of five he contracted rheumatic fever which left him with a defective heart and curtailed his physical activity all his life. Compelled to seek quiet pursuits he devoted a deep love of good music and a burning thirst for spiritual truth. As a young man he composed and arranged orchestral music and played in local orchestras. He investigated religion. In 1948, through an advertisement in the area newspaper, he learned of the Bahá'í Faith and met Kenneth and Roberta Christian in Lansing, Michigan. He immediately converted to the Bahá'í Faith and participated in local, state and national activities.

Responding to the call of Shoghi Effendi for pioneers in the Ten Year Crusade , Nolen and his family (Lois A. (Warner), Linda Jean, Cynthia and John) immediately volunteered to go to a virgin territory. It was suggested by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that he go to the Azores Islands where the climate is mild. He resigned his job as a draftsman, disposed of his home and household furnishings, and with his wife and three children boarded a freighter which brought them to the Azores on October 8, 1953. For this action, Mr. and Mrs. Nolen were designated Knights of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi.

After a period of physical hardship, and handicapped in his search for employment because of lack of knowledge of the Portuguese language, Mr. Nolen found work with a building contractor at a United States air base and later he was employed by the United States Government as a draftsman at Lajes Air Force base on Terceira Island. Life became considerably easier. Mr. Nolen applied himself diligently to a study of the Portuguese language in order to equip himself to teach the Faith. he traveled to all nine islands in the group, teaching, presenting literature and made several trips to

meet the Bahá'ís of Portugal and Germany.

At Riḍván 1958, the first Spiritual Assembly was formed on Terceira Island but it was not until December of that year that the first two native believers embraced the Faith. By 1961 the local religious authorities grew concerned. The International Police summoned Mr. Nolen and advised him that he must discontinue teaching the Bahá'í Faith or leave the island. Despite these obstacles the Spiritual Assembly continued to meet and study classes were held in Bahá'í homes. A functioning body of believers was left in the Azores when Mr. Nolen's failing health led to his reluctant decision, in 1962, to return to the United States.

Two more children had been born to the Nolens (Christopher Lee and Sylvia Louise) in the Azores, and although the eldest daughter (Linda) had matured and returned to America earlier, there was still a family of six who settled in Tacoma, Washington, in August 1962 and enjoyed the sorely missed activities of Bahá'í schools, institutes and conventions. Mr. Nolen now enjoyed the bounty of unfettered teaching of the Faith he loved.

After a prolonged illness which confined him to hospital, Richard Nolen died on May 5, 1964.

Comments

No comments.

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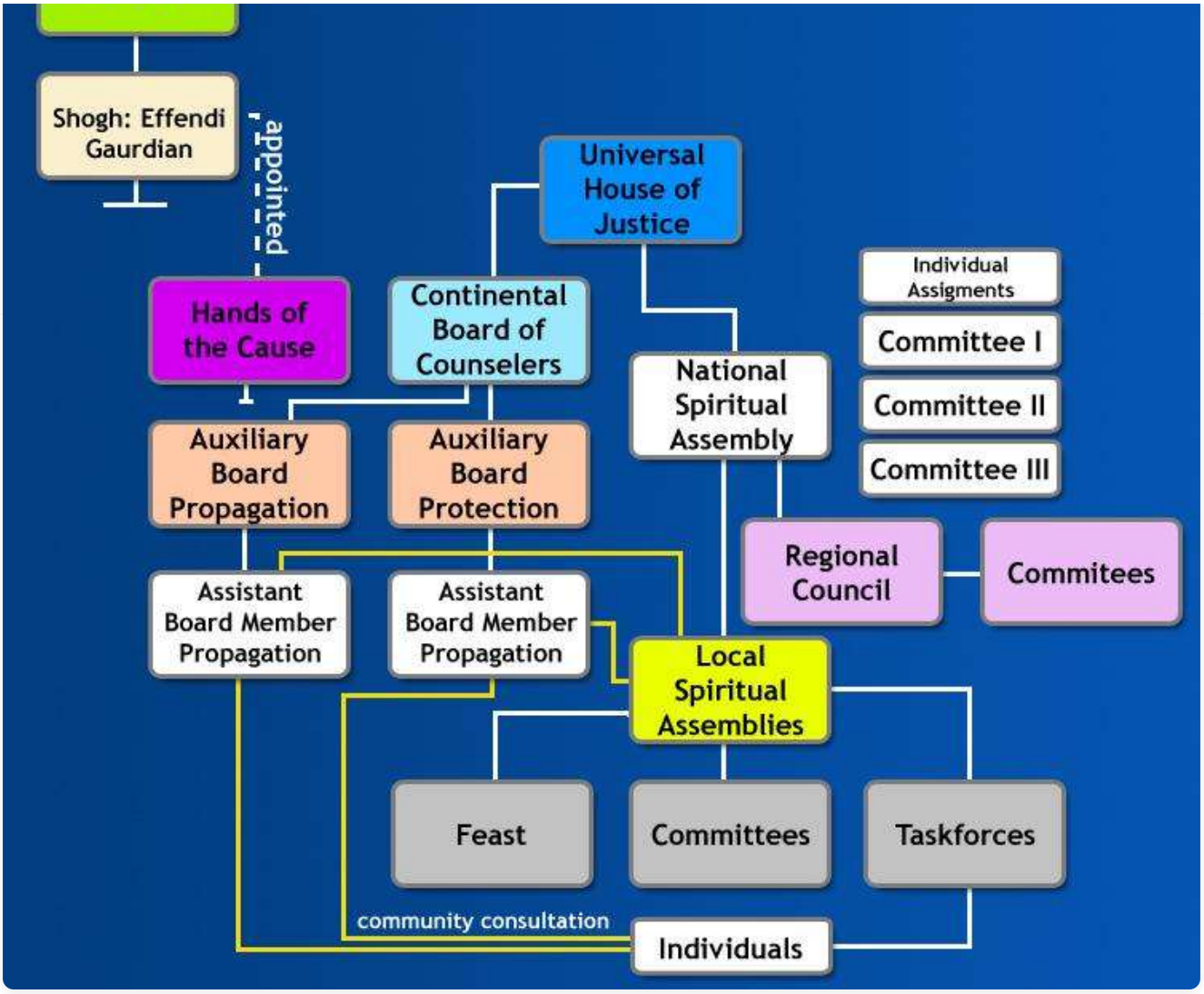

Comments

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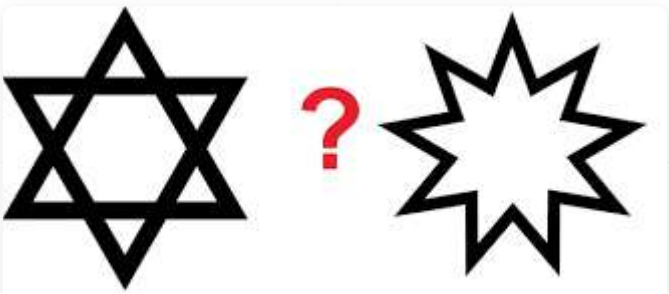
> 1819. Believers of Jewish Descent Should Call Themselves Bahá'ís
>
> "He feels you did the right thing to have yourself under 'Religion' registered as a Bahá'í. Unfortunately, owing to this obnoxious and vicious race prejudice of every sort which afflicts the world today, the term Jew has come more to mean a race than a religion. You certainly, as your father feels, should never wish to disassociate yourself from a group of people who have contributed as much to the world as the Jews have. On the other hand your actual religion today is Bahá'í, and he feels that Jews should, when they become Bahá'ís, always give this as their Faith, but as their racial descent they should give 'Jewish'."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 15, 1948)



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From Baha'i News, no. 244, June 1951, p. 4...

> "Masra'ih is a Moslem religious endowment , and it is consequently impossible, under existing laws in this country, for it to be sold. However, as the friends are aware, the Ministry of Religions, due to the direct intervention of the Minister himself, Rabbi Maimon , consented, in the face of considerable opposition, to deliver Masra'ih to the Baha'is as a Holy Place to be visited by Baha'i pilgrims. This means that we rent it from the Department of Moslem and Druze affairs in the Ministry of Religions. The head of this Department is also a Rabbi, Dr. Hirschberg. Recently he, his wife and party, visited all the Baha'i properties in Haifa and 'Akka, following upon a very pleasant tea party in the Western Pilgrim House with the members of the International Baha'i Council."

Message from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, March 15, 1973...

> Occasion Naw-Rúz 130 joyously announce Bahá'í world acquisition by

purchase mansion Mazra'ih result several years patient persistent determined negotiations thereby adding to Bahá'í endowments Holy Land first residence Bahá'u'lláh after nine years spent walled prison city 'Akká. Control this holy site reacquired by beloved Guardian after lapse more than fifty years when he secured lease mansion 1950 extended to present time. Purchase includes land area approximating twentyfour thousand square meters highly suitable extension gardens cultivation. Offering prayer thanksgiving Sacred Threshold this greatly cherished bounty.

Comments

No comments.

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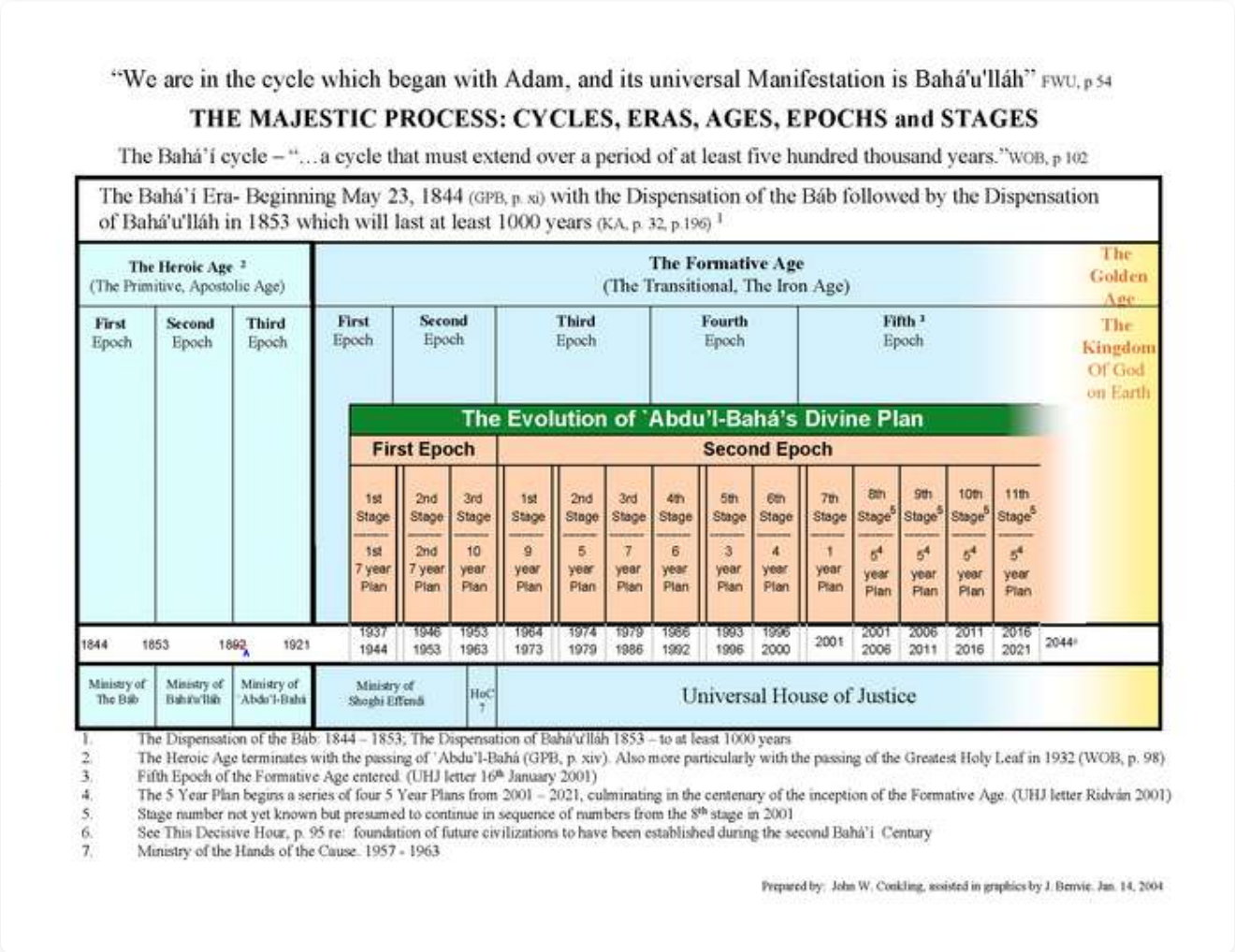
"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54
THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES
The Bahá'í cycle – "...a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102
The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2 (The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
The Formative Age (The Transitional, The Iron Age)
The Golden Age
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage5 5^4 year Plan
9th Stage5 5^4 year Plan
10th Stage5 5^4 year Plan
11th Stage5 5^4 year Plan
1844
1853
1892 A
1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
2044 6
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of `Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice
1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of `Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963
Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bennie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

No comments.

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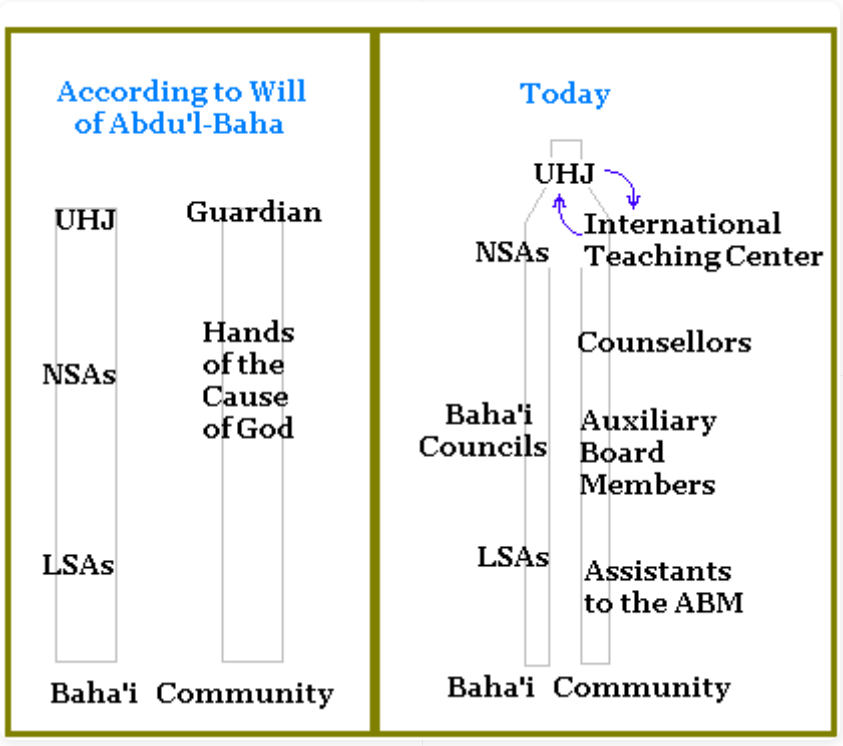

Comments

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March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Divinity of Bahá'u'lláh is a stumbling block in the West. The best answer is as written in the Iqan. Bahá'u'lláh tells what He means by Divinity. Bahá'u'lláh is Divine - we believe this - but we must explain what is meant by Divinity. The Catholics are correct when they teach the Divinity of Christ - but they have the mistake of confusing the God-Head with the Prophet. Only God and the Prophet are Divine. When people question when Bahá'u'lláh says "I am God" - refer them to Christ's statement "I am (in) the Father" - it is the same thing. All Prophets have said the same thing. Bahá'u'lláh has said the same thing in the Iqan. Catholics believe that God and the Son are the same - this is fundamentally wrong. It is like saying the ray is the sun. To say that Bahá'u'lláh is greater than other prophets is wrong - they are all Divine - all mirror the Light - but in Bahá'u'lláh - his mirror deflects the Light greater - not because He is intrinsically superior - rather because the capacity of the people is greater to receive the Light."

Comments

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Published on: March 12, 2026

March 15. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "There will be an Israeli Branch of the NSA established during the coming Ten-Year Crusade for the NSAs I have designated on the map with a star. Germany is one of them. You must tell the German friends that. The first step is incorporation - every NSA must incorporate first. Next - through a lawyer in the Holy Land - a Branch is established - as a Religious society. When the government accepts the incorporation documents - I will transfer land to them. At present America and India have an Israeli Branch. The Branch is a legal bond to unite the NSAs of the world to the World Center - this is unique in religious history. This will add to the prestige of the Faith in Israel - and will consolidate the International endowments. Then this property has the backing of the respective governments. If someone wishes to encroach on our property - we refer them to the legal owners - which are the NSA's of the various countries who are not here (in the Holy Land). The Branches add to the prestige of the Faith - consolidate its ties to the World Center."

Comments

No comments.

March 15. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "concerning the exact times at which certain Bahá'í Holy Days should, if possible, be observed in view of the different times of sunset in various localities and also the use by some countries of such devices as daylight saving time."

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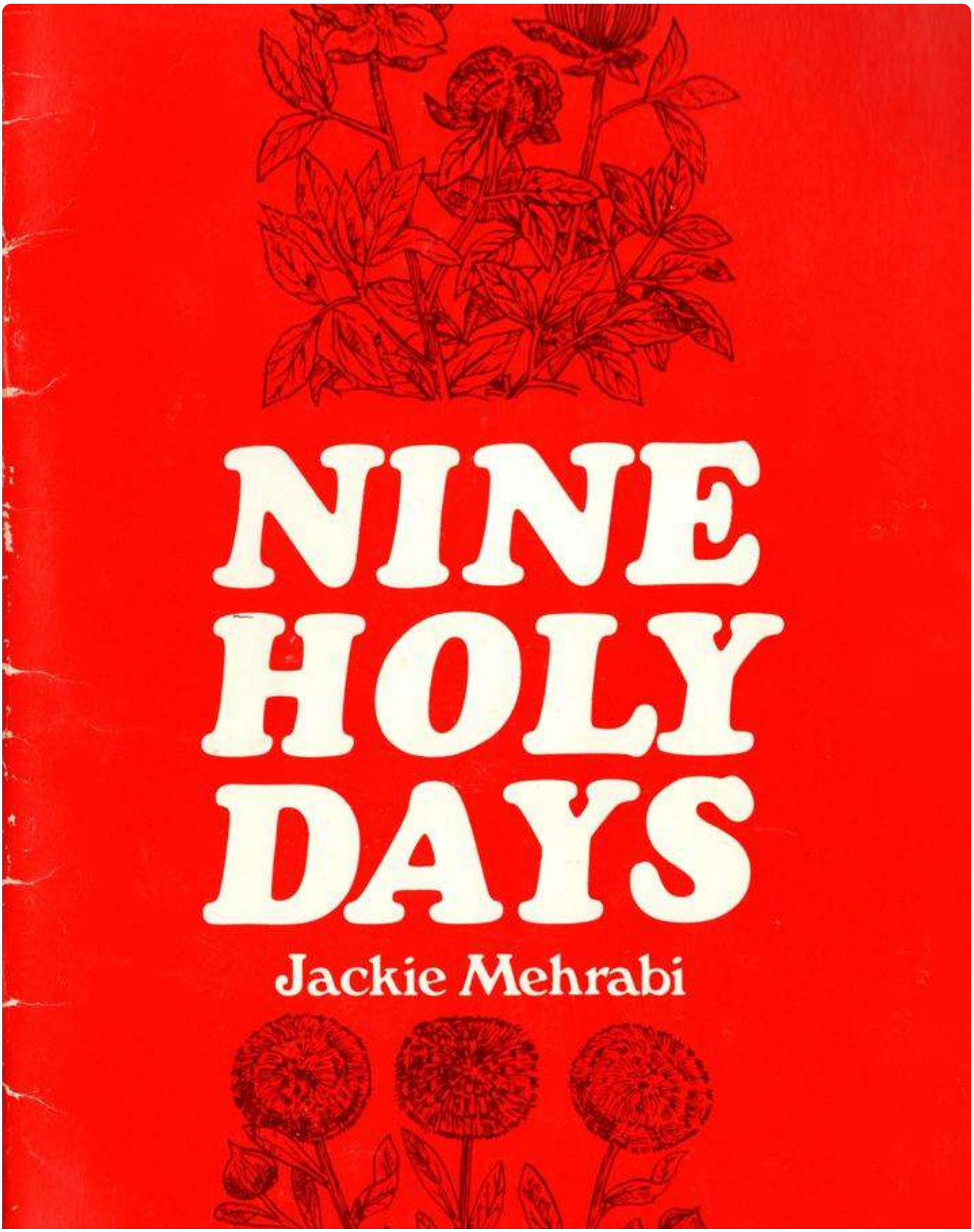
> Commemoration of Certain Bahá'í Holy Days
>
> 15 MARCH 1992
>
> To all National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friends,
>
> A number of questions have been asked concerning the exact times at which certain Bahá'í Holy Days should, if possible, be observed in view of the different times of sunset in various localities and also the use by some countries of such devices as daylight saving time. Since this matter will be of particular importance to the friends during the Holy Year, the Universal House of Justice has asked us to share the following advice with you.
>
> As the Guardian indicated, the commemoration of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh should be held, if feasible, at 3 a.m. on 29 May, and that of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at 1 a.m. on 28 November. These times should be measured according to standard time in each area. If daylight saving time is being used in the country, the commemorations should continue to be observed according to standard time.

It will be noted that, in accordance with this schedule, the observances held on each Holy Day succeed one another for an entire twenty-four hours, as the earth turns on its axis.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT



Comments

No comments.

March 15. On this date in 1993, an individual wrote the UHJ about her homosexuality, eliciting a response providing "clear summaries of the Bahá'í view of homosexuality and also discuss, in the context of the homosexual affliction, the nature and purpose of man and the spiritual struggles with...."

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Homosexuality: Biological, or a Learned Behavior? by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1993-07-05 M E M O R A N D U M To: The Universal House of Justice From: The Research Department

Homosexuality

Mrs. ..., in a letter to the Universal House of Justice dated 15 March 1993, has raised several questions about the Bahá'í view of homosexuality. A number of her questions arise from an article she has read recently in the Atlantic Monthly magazine which supports the view that homosexual tendencies are biologically based. In particular she expresses concern for the plight of several Bahá'í men whom she knows and who are faced with the difficult struggle against their homosexual preferences. We provide the following response.

We attach a selection of extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, and from letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi and of the Universal House of Justice pertaining to homosexuality. [online here -J.W.] These extracts offer many insights into the subject. In particular we direct Mrs. ...'s attention to the letters of the Universal House of Justice. They provide clear summaries of the Bahá'í view of homosexuality and also

discuss, in the context of the homosexual affliction, the nature and purpose of man and the spiritual struggles with which he must contend in this life. In consideration of the questions raised by Mrs. ..., we summarize below some of the fundamental points made in the attached extracts:

1. Homosexuality is strongly condemned by Bahá'u'lláh (Extracts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).
2. The Bahá'í Writings do not point to the causes of homosexuality (Extracts 11, 13, 16), although they do state that
3. Homosexuality is an "aberration", and is "against nature" (Extracts 3, 4, 5, 13, 17).
4. Homosexuality can be overcome (Extracts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17), and
5. The individual is expected to make an effort to overcome the affliction (Extracts 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17).

In light of the above information, some of Mrs. ...'s questions become moot. However, a few additional points can be noted that may further assist her in her thinking on the subject. Regarding the old debate on which human behaviours are "innate" and which are "learned", it is worth noting that the Bahá'í Writings do not uphold the materialistic view that nature is perfect.

Abdu'l-Bahá makes this very clear, for example, in a talk found on pages 308-312 of "The Promulgation of Universal Peace", where He states:

The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor.l 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teaching in this regard may be easily understood if one considers that "nature" sometimes provides examples that are unworthy of emulation by human beings. For example, the fact that some species eat their young does not mean that it is acceptable for human beings to do so. The Bahá'í concept of human nature is teleological; that is, there are certain qualities intended by God for "human nature", and qualities which do not accord with these are described as "unnatural" This does not mean that such

aberrations may not be caused by the operations of "nature." Alcoholism is a good example. As Mrs. ... points out, evidence indicates that it may possibly be induced by a genetic flaw. In that sense it is due to "natural" causes, but this does not necessarily mean that it is. Regarding the question of whether or not same-sex marriages would ever be permitted by the Universal House of Justice, the enclosed extracts indicate clearly that it would not. In addition, it is interesting to note that 'Abdu'l-Bahá says in a Tablet, Know thou that the command of marriage is eternal. It will never be changed nor altered. This is divine creation and there is not the slightest possibility that change or alteration affect this divine creation (marriage). Regarding Mrs. ...'s question about the possibility of altering the genetic makeup of an unborn child who shows a predisposition to becoming homosexual, this presumably would be a question, should it ever arise, on which the House of Justice would decide in the future. The Universal House of Justice has indicated that "To the question of alteration of homosexual bents, much study must be given, and doubtless in the future clear principles of prevention and treatment will emerge" (Extract 13). Mrs. ...'s final question is, "How can we now help Bahá'ís struggling with their own homosexuality?" again, we refer to the attached extracts. The Universal House of Justice states:

As for the responsibility of Assemblies and of individual Bahá'ís, certainly all are called upon to be understanding, supportive and helpful to any individual who carries the burden of homosexuality (Extract 13)." In this regard, the Spiritual Assembly, while taking care not to pry into the private lives of the believers to ensure that they are behaving properly", has the duty to determine whether the immoral conduct is open and scandalous and can bring the name of the Faith into disrepute, in which case the Assembly must take action to counsel the believer and require him to make every effort to mend his ways (Extract 10). The Universal House of Justice lists "the loving support of the Bahá'í community as one of the elements through which "individuals are able to effect a change in their behaviour" (Extract 14), and calls upon "all those concerned" to "have understanding and sympathy for the individual so afflicted... This law is no reason for Bahá'ís to consider homosexuals as outcasts" (Extract 17). In this regard, it may be well to note that the extracts indicate that it is not the condition of being attracted to someone of the same sex which Bahá'u'lláh

condemns, but the action of engaging in sexual relations with someone of the same sex. This distinction places homosexuality in the category of one of many problems, from which an individual may suffer, both physical and psychological. Some are the result of the individual's own behaviour, some are caused by the circumstances in which he grew up, some are congenital. Some human beings are born blind, some suffer from incapacitating accidents or diseases. Such conditions present the individual affected, and those around him, with serious problems, and it is one of the challenges of the human condition that all those concerned should strive to overcome such problems and have understanding and sympathy for the individual so afflicted (Extract 17). To a woman whose son had recently informed her about his homosexuality, the Universal House of Justice counselled, "demonstrate love and acceptance toward [him]", and "urge [him] to seek appropriate counselling" (Extract 16). In this regard, we are aware that the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States has had experience in dealing with the issue, and will likely be informed about various kinds of therapeutic resources for people concerned with homosexuality. Man's physical existence on this earth is a period during which the moral exercise of his free will is tried and tested in order to prepare his soul for the other worlds of God, and we must welcome affliction and tribulations as opportunities for improvement in our eternal selves. The House of Justice points out that homosexuals are not the only segment of human society labouring at this daily task -- every human being is beset by such inner promptings as pride, greed, selfishness, lustful heterosexual or homosexual desires, to name a few which must be overcome, and overcome them we must if we are to fulfil the purpose of our human existence. (16 July 1980 to an individual believer)

There should be real incentive for you to courageously face the problems inherent in the situation you describe in your letter, and to firmly resolve to change your way of life. But you must desire to do so. Both you and your Bahá'í friend must first recognize that a homosexual relationship subverts the purpose of human life and that determined effort to overcome the wayward tendencies which promote this practice which, like other sexual vices, is so abhorrent to the Creator of all mankind will help you both to return to a path that leads to true happiness. (23 August 1982 to an individual believer)

Note:

1. Promulgation of Universal Peace (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 310.

Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "There is a wide range of sexual abnormalities. ...The Faith, on the contrary, makes it abundantly clear that homosexuality is an abnormality, is a great problem for the individual so afflicted, and that he or she should strive to overcome it."

Published on: March 12, 2026

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> You mention recent research which indicates that there may be a genetic basis for homosexuality; you accept the Bahá'í view of this matter, but **you question the use of such terms as "abnormality, handicap, affliction, problem, etc." since they can create misunderstandings. On the contrary, the House of Justice feels that just such words can be a great help to the individuals concerned. Human beings suffer from many problems, both physical and psychological.** Some are the result of the individual's own behaviour, some are caused by the circumstances in which he grew up, some are congenital. Some human beings are born blind, some suffer from incapacitating accidents or diseases. Such conditions present the individual affected, and those around him, with serious problems, and it is one of the challenges of the human condition that all those concerned should strive to overcome such problems and have understanding and sympathy for the

individual so afflicted.

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The primary purpose of sexual relations is, clearly, to perpetuate the species. The fact that personal pleasure is derived therefrom is one of the bounties of God. The sex act is merely one moment in a long process, from courtship through marriage, the procreation of children, their nursing and rearing, and involves the establishment of a mutually sustaining relationship between two souls which will endure beyond life on this earth.

Some couples are unable to have children, and that, in itself, is an affliction, but this fact does not vitiate all the other bounties of the marital relationship. Some individuals for various reasons are unable to find a spouse, or choose to remain single; they must develop their natures and talents in other ways. **One could have concluded that homosexuals could well establish stable relationships with one another for mutual support, similar to the marital relationship of a heterosexual couple who cannot have children. This, indeed, is the conclusion that some churches and governments have come to. But Bahá'u'lláh, having divine knowledge of human nature, shows that such a relationship is not a permissible or beneficial solution to a homosexual's condition. If a homosexual cannot so overcome his or her condition to the extent of being able to have a heterosexual marriage, he or she must remain single, and abstain from sexual relations. These are the same requirements as for a heterosexual person who does not marry.**

This law is no reason for Bahá'ís to consider homosexuals as outcasts. If they are not Bahá'ís there is also no reason to expect them to obey the Bahá'í law in this respect any more than we would expect a non-Baha i to abstain from drinking alcohol. (16 March 1992)

Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote "With regard to Ex-President Wilson and Dr. Jordan, it seems fairly clear that both of these men were considerably influenced by the Bahá'í Teachings; but at the same time it is well to avoid making dogmatic statements that they..."

Published on: March 12, 2026

March 16. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote "With regard to Ex-President Wilson and Dr. Jordan, it seems fairly clear that both of these men were considerably influenced by the Bahá'í Teachings; but at the same time it is well to avoid making dogmatic statements that they 'got all their principles from Bahá'u'lláh', or the like, as we are not in a position to prove such statements, and to make claims which we cannot prove weakens instead of strengthening our position." Wilsonian principles were lauded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. An avowed foreign interventionist, imperialist, and Social Darwinist who spread racial segregation in the federal government, Wilson's legacy is still defended by the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

> 1471. President Wilson and Dr. Jordan
>
> "With regard to Ex-President Wilson and Dr. Jordan, it seems fairly clear that both of these men were considerably influenced by the Bahá'í Teachings; but at the same time it is well to avoid making dogmatic statements that they 'got all their principles from Bahá'u'lláh', or the like, as we are not in a position to prove such statements, and to make claims which we cannot prove weakens instead of strengthening our position."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 16, 1925)

On September 22, 1912, during his tour of North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the home of William Jennings Bryan in Lincoln, Nebraska. William Jennings Bryan was

not home at the time, however, as he was busy campaigning for Woodrow Wilson in whose administration he would serve as Secretary of State. 'Abdu'l-Bahá met his wife and daughter instead. Reports of a Wilson-Bahá'í connection began to circulate among American Bahá'ís during Wilson's term as President from 1913 to 1921.

On October 2, 1912, Mahmúd's Diary records "Among some of the prominent people visiting `Abdu'l-Bahá was the president of Stanford University at Palo Alto. He was so attracted to the teachings that **he begged the Master to come to his university and speak.** "

On May 5, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson sent a telegram to the US National Bahá'í Convention expressing his "gratitude to all concerned." Wilsonian principles were lauded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. An avowed foreign interventionist , imperialist , and Social Darwinist who spread racial segregation in the federal government , Wilson's legacy is still defended by the Bahá'í Administrative Order .

> The White House, Washington, May 5, 1916. My dear Mr Hall, the telegram you sent me on behalf of Bahá'ís of America, assembled in annual convention, has given me the deepest gratification and I hope you will have an opportunity to express my gratitude to all concerned. Cordially and sincerely yours, /s/ Woodrow Wilson.

'Abdu'l-Bahá would later praise President Woodrow Wilson ...

> The President of the Republic, Dr. Wilson, is indeed serving the Kingdom of God for he is restless and strives day and night that the rights of all men may be preserved safe and secure, that even small nations, like greater ones, may dwell in peace and comfort, under the protection of Righteousness and Justice. This purpose is indeed a lofty one. I trust that the incomparable Providence will assist and confirm such souls under all conditions.

On December 25, 1938 Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later published as *The Advent of Divine Justice* addressed "to the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada," describing the role of America in establishing the Most Great Peace. The work is divided into five parts. The fifth

section provides some concluding remarks. Shoghi Effendi states that American Bahá'í's faithfulness to the Bahá'í Faith has potentiated the United States to establish the Most Great Peace. Shoghi Effendi comments on contemporary events, lamenting America's move away from Wilsonianism , "The ideals that fired the imagination of America's tragically unappreciated President, whose high endeavors, however much nullified by a visionless generation, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, through His own pen, acclaimed as signalizing the dawn of the Most Great Peace, though now lying in the dust, bitterly reproach a heedless generation for having so cruelly abandoned them."

On June 5, 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Challenging Requirements of the Present Hour," one of his "Letters to the American Bahá'í Community" included in *Citadel of Faith,* referring to "the immortal Woodrow Wilson"...

> To her President, the immortal Woodrow Wilson, must be ascribed the unique honor, among the statesmen of any nation, whether of the East or of the West, of having voiced sentiments so akin to the principles animating the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and of having more than any other world leader, contributed to the creation of the League of Nations--achievements which the pen of the Center of God's Covenant acclaimed as signalizing the dawn of the Most Great Peace, whose sun, according to that same pen, must needs arise as the direct consequence of the enforcement of the laws of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.
>
> To the matchless position achieved by so preeminent a president of the American Union, in a former period, at so critical a juncture in international affairs, must now be added the splendid initiative taken, in recent years by the American government, culminating in the birth of the successor of that League in San Francisco, and the establishment of its permanent seat in the city of New York. Nor can the preponderating influence exerted by this nation in the councils of the world, the prodigious economic and political power that it wields, the prestige it enjoys, the wealth of which it disposes, the idealism that animates its people, her magnificent contribution, as a result of her unparalleled productive power, for the relief of human suffering and the rehabilitation of peoples and

> nations, be overlooked in a survey of the position which she holds, and which distinguishes her from her sister nations in both the new and old worlds.

Wilson's legacy is still defended by the Bahá'í Administrative Order .

Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The words of Bahá'u'lláh regarding 'a strange and wonderful instrument...' can, in the light of what the Master said in San Francisco, be taken as a reference to the great destructive power atomic energy can be made to release."

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> 1585. Atomic Energy--"A Strange and Wonderful Instrument"
>
> "The words of Bahá'u'lláh regarding 'a strange and wonderful instrument...' can, in the light of what the Master said in San Francisco, be taken as a reference to the great destructive power atomic energy can be made to release."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 16, 1946)

Comments

No comments.

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> 1141. The Present Need of an Auxiliary Language
>
> "What Bahá'u'lláh is referring to in the Eighth Leaf of the Exalted Paradise is a far distant time, when the world is really one country, and one language would be a sensible possibility. It does not contradict His instructions as to the need immediately for an auxiliary language."
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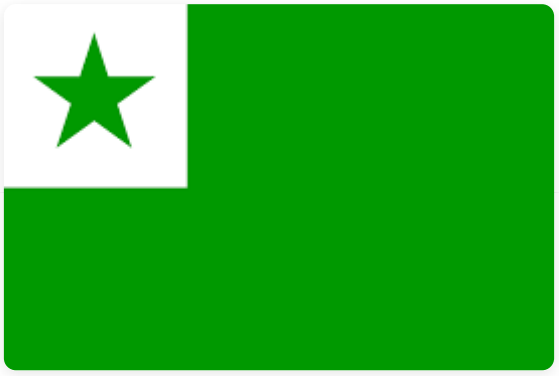

Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 2016, an art exhibit opened in Dubai featuring, among others, the art work of Maliheh Afnan, Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughter who had passed away five months previous.

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The daughter of Persian parents, she was born in Haifa on March 24, 1935. to prominent Bahá'í lineage. Her father was Nayyir Afnan, son of Siyyid Ali Afnan and grandson of Hajjí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan, the brother-in-law of the Báb. Nayyir Afnan's mother was Furughiyyih Khanum, the daughter of Bahá'u'lláh from his third marriage to Gawhar Khanum. Her mother was Ruhangiz Afnan. Her maternal grandparents were Mírzá Hádí Shírází and Ḍíyá'íyyih Khánum, the eldest daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Munirih Khánum. Ruhangiz, having married an individual who had been declared a Covenant-breaker by 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in turn declared a Covenant-breaker by her brother, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

Maliheh Afnan moved to Beirut with her family in 1949. She received a BA from the American University of Beirut and a MA in Fine Arts from the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design in Washington, D.C.. Afnan lived in Kuwait from 1963 to 1966, in Beirut from 1966 to 1974 and in Paris from 1974 until 1997, when she moved to London.

Afnan's work has been shown primarily in France and in London. Her first solo show, in a Basel gallery in 1971, was organized by the American artist Mark Tobey. Her work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the British Museum in London, the Written Art Collection in Germany, the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and the BAII Bank Collection in Paris.

She died in London on January 6, 2016, at the age of 80.

Comments

No comments.

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On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12. On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the Houseof Justice .

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago Houseof Justice changed its name to the Houseof Spirituality . The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching .

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandaráni of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its

construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago Houseof Justice , noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the " Houseof Justice " had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

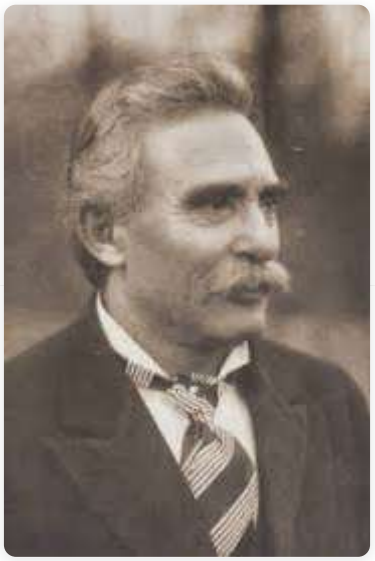
> Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."
>
> (30 November 1930)

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of

Justice."

> 270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.
>
> "...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male .



Comments

No comments.

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Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote someone questioning "the use of such terms as "abnormality, handicap, affliction, problem, etc." since they can create misunderstandings. On the contrary, the House of Justice feels that just such words can be a great help to the individuals concerned."

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> You mention recent research which indicates that there may be a genetic basis for homosexuality; you accept the Bahá'í view of this matter, but **you question the use of such terms as "abnormality, handicap, affliction, problem, etc." since they can create misunderstandings. On the contrary, the House of Justice feels that just such words can be a great help to the individuals concerned. Human beings suffer from many problems, both physical and psychological.** Some are the result of the individual's own behaviour, some are caused by the circumstances in which he grew up, some are congenital. Some human beings are born blind, some suffer from incapacitating accidents or diseases. Such conditions present the individual affected, and those around him, with serious problems, and it is one of the challenges of the human condition that all those concerned should strive to overcome such problems and have understanding and sympathy for the individual so afflicted.
>
> **There is a wide range of sexual abnormalities. Some people**

nowadays maintain that homosexuality is not an abnormality and that homosexuals should be encouraged to establish sexual relations with one or more partners of the same sex. The Faith, on the contrary, makes it abundantly clear that homosexuality is an abnormality, is a great problem for the individual so afflicted, and that he or she should strive to overcome it. The social implications of such an attitude are very important.

The primary purpose of sexual relations is, clearly, to perpetuate the species. The fact that personal pleasure is derived therefrom is one of the bounties of God. The sex act is merely one moment in a long process, from courtship through marriage, the procreation of children, their nursing and rearing, and involves the establishment of a mutually sustaining relationship between two souls which will endure beyond life on this earth.

Some couples are unable to have children, and that, in itself, is an affliction, but this fact does not vitiate all the other bounties of the marital relationship. Some individuals for various reasons are unable to find a spouse, or choose to remain single; they must develop their natures and talents in other ways. **One could have concluded that homosexuals could well establish stable relationships with one another for mutual support, similar to the marital relationship of a heterosexual couple who cannot have children. This, indeed, is the conclusion that some churches and governments have come to. But Bahá'u'lláh, having divine knowledge of human nature, shows that such a relationship is not a permissible or beneficial solution to a homosexual's condition. If a homosexual cannot so overcome his or her condition to the extent of being able to have a heterosexual marriage, he or she must remain single, and abstain from sexual relations. These are the same requirements as for a heterosexual person who does not marry.**

This law is no reason for Bahá'ís to consider homosexuals as outcasts. If they are not Bahá'ís there is also no reason to expect them to obey the

Bahá'í law in this respect any more than we would expect a non-Baha i to abstain from drinking alcohol. (16 March 1992)

Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "to steel themselves without delay to face an unexpected emergency...The anticipated trials will enable its members to plumb greater depths of consecration, soar to nobler heights of collective endeavor, and disclose in fuller.."

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> A Testing Period Recalling Ordeals of the Dawn-Breakers
>
> The first half of the opening decade of the second Bahá'í century is terminating. The great-minded, stout-hearted, high-spirited American Bahá'í Community, laden with the trophies accumulated in the course of its fifty years' magnificent stewardship of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is irresistibly embarking upon a two and a half year period unsurpassed in its fateful consequences by any previous stage traversed in the community's eventful history.
>
> Its members, without exception, are called upon **to steel themselves without delay to face an unexpected emergency** , seize a God-given opportunity, meet a supreme challenge, and show forth a tenacity of purpose, a solidarity in sacrifice, an austerity in everyday life, worthy the Martyr-Prophet of their Faith as well as their heroic spiritual forebears, the hundredth anniversary of whose agonizing tribulations, including captivity, sieges, betrayals, spoliation and martyrdom, is being commemorated during this same period.

No lesser tribute can be paid the memory of the glorious Báb , the immortal Quddús , the lion-hearted Mullá Husayn , the erudite Vahid , the audacious Hujjat , the illustrious seven martyrs of Tihrán and a host of unnumbered heroes whose lifeblood flowed so copiously in the course of the opening decade of the first Bahá'í century, by the privileged champion-builders of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh during the present critical stage in the unfoldment of the Formative Age of His Dispensation, than a parallel outpouring of their substance by the builders of the most holy House of Worship laboring in the corresponding decade of the succeeding century.

The American Bahá'í Community, exalted, singled out among sister communities of East and West through revelation of the Tablets of the Divine Plan , is unavoidably approaching a testing period, crucial, prolonged, potent, purifying, clearly envisaged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, different from but recalling in its severity the ordeals which afflicted the dawn-breakers in a former Age .

The anticipated trials will enable its members to plumb greater depths of consecration, soar to nobler heights of collective endeavor, and disclose in fuller measure the future glory of their destiny.

Might not the strain, the stress, of the strenuous period now being ushered in through inscrutable dispensations of Providence be productive of perspicuous benefits and blessings reminiscent of the incalculable outpourings of divine grace which followed closely in the train of the woeful trials immortalizing the initial, the bloodiest, the most dramatic period in the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

[March 16, 1949]

Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1969, the NSA of Canada wrote a Foreword to it publication of 'Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum's "Message to the Indian and Eskimo Bahá'í of the Western Hemisphere."

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FOREWORD

The writer of this letter, 'Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum has served the Faith of Baha'u'lllah with great distinction for many years. She was born of a distinguished Canadian Baha'i family and raised in Montreal. In 1937 she had the great honour of being chosen as his wife by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith. In more recent years, Ruhiyyih Khanum has served with the rank of a Hand of the Cause, and in the course of her world-wide travels has visited various tribes of Indian people throughout the Western Hemisphere. In Canada, one tribe, the Blackfoot, conferred upon her the name of "Blessed Mother".

In the letter printed here, Ruhiyyih Khanum speaks of the assurance given in the Baha'i Writings that the future of the Indian Eskimo people is very great. She explains that the Indian and Eskimo believers can themselves best help to fulfill these promises by taking the Faith of Baha'u'llah to their own people.

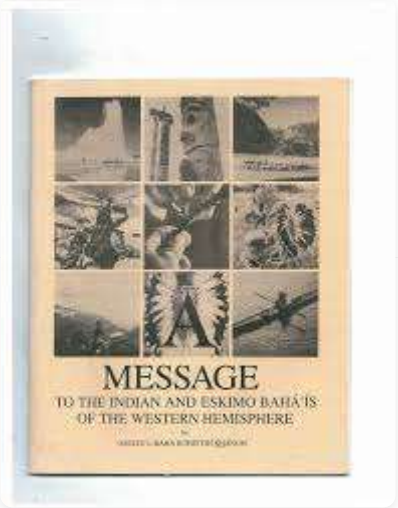
It is with a great sense of happiness and privilege that Canada's National Spiritual Assembly is able to reproduce for wider distribution this inspiring letter which Ruhiyyih Khanum has written to those whom she regards as her "especially loved Brothers and Sisters".

National Spiritual Assembly

of the Baha'is of Canada

Haifa

March 16, 1969



Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1906, Borrah Kavelin was born in Russia to a distinguished Jewish family. In 1950 he was elected to the NSA of the United States, where he served for 13 years until his election to the inaugural UHJ, where he served from 1963 until his death in 1988.

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H. Borrah Kavelin was born in Russia to a distinguished Jewish family on March 16, 1988. When he was three years old, the family immigrated to the United States and settled in Denver, Colorado. His love of music drew him to New York, where his debut as an operatic tenor occurred on the stage of Carnegie Hall. During the Great Depression he was forced to leave his musical career and became secretary to the director of a real estate firm. His ability and diligence were soon recognized. He became a partner in the firm, and later became executive vice president and partner of the distinguished realty firm Durand Taylor and Company for 20 years.

From 1941 to 1950, H. Borrah Kavelin served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of New York City. In 1950 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, where he served for 13 years until his election to the inaugural Universal House of Justice, where he served from 1963 until his death on December 18, 1988.

Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said "Majid Din is sinking. He is 98 years old .... He lives adjacent to the Mansion at Bahji. The Master has referred to him in his Will and Testament. He has called him the "manifestation of Satan" ...He is half-paralyzed."

Published on: March 12, 2026

March 16. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi said " Majid Din is sinking. He is 98 years old - the incited of Muhammad Ali. He lives adjacent to the Mansion at Bahji. The Master has referred to him in his Will and Testament. He has called him the "manifestation of Satan" he was worse than Muhammad Ali - for he incited Muhammad Ali. almost 100 years old - and God has kept him so he might witness the rise of the Faith. He was worse than the Arch-Breaker of the Covenant. He is half-paralyzed."

On December 20, 1937, Shoghi Effendi had announced the death of "Archbreaker of Covenant" in a cablegram later published in "Messages to America."

> ARCHBREAKER OF COVENANT The Hand of Omnipotence has removed the archbreaker of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant , his hopes shattered, his plottings frustrated, the society of his fellow-conspirators extinguished. God's triumphant Faith forges on, its unity unimpaired, its purpose unsullied, its stability unshaken. Such a death calls for neither exultation nor recrimination, but evokes overwhelming pity at so tragic a downfall unparalleled in religious history. Cablegram December 20, 1937

Bahá'ís often compare the role of Covenant-breakers to Judas. But Judas but was one individual, whereas those who they consider Covenant-breakers include every descendant of Bahá'u'lláh and numerous other prominent individuals such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's personal secretary and interpreter , the founder of the American Bahá'í

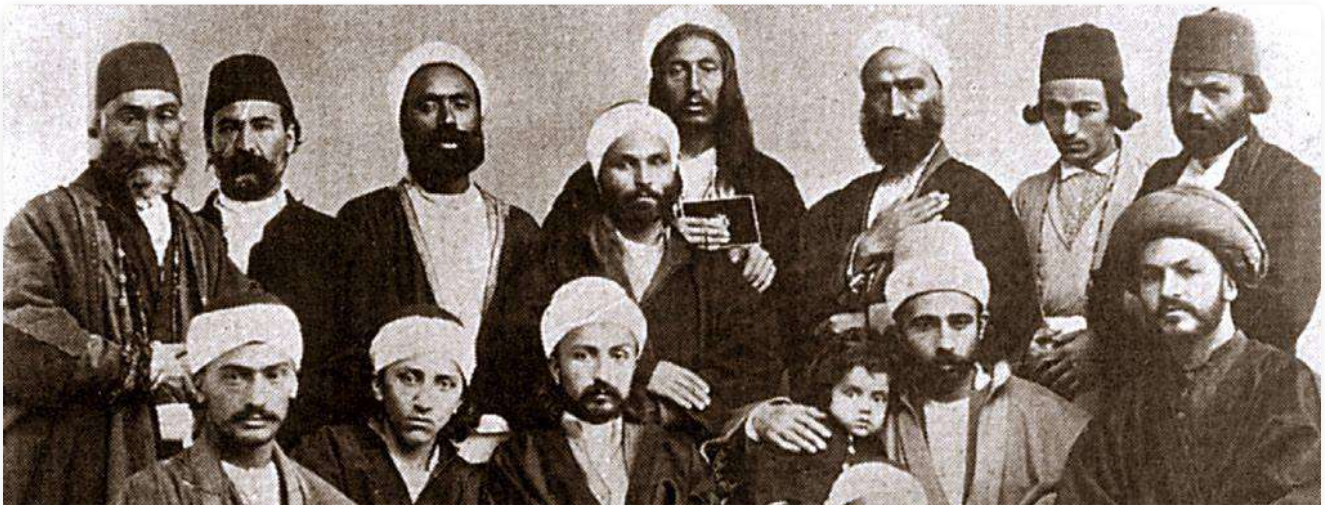
community , the Chief of Missionaries , and numerous other prominent individuals.

Shoghi Effendi notes with some degree of triumphalism the death of some of these individuals in *God Passes By* ...

> [Mohammad Ali Bahai 's] brother, Mírzá Ḍíya'u'lláh , died prematurely; Mírzá Áqá Ján , his dupe, followed that same brother, three years later, to the grave; and Mírzá Badí'u'lláh , his chief accomplice, betrayed his cause, published a signed denunciation of his evil acts, but rejoined him again, only to be alienated from him in consequence of the scandalous behavior of his own daughter. Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí 's half-sister, Furúghíyyih , died of cancer, whilst her husband, Siyyid 'Alí , passed away from a heart attack before his sons could reach him, the eldest being subsequently stricken in the prime of life, by the same malady. Muḥammad-Javád-i-Qazvíní , a notorious Covenant-breaker, perished miserably. Shu'á'u'lláh who, as witnessed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will , had counted on the murder of the Center of the Covenant, and who had been despatched to the United States by his father to join forces with Ibráhím Khayru'lláh, returned crestfallen and empty-handed from his inglorious mission. Jamál-i-Burújirdí , Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí 's ablest lieutenant in Persia, fell a prey to a fatal and loathsome disease; Siyyid Mihdíy-i-Dahájí , who, betraying 'Abdu'l-Bahá, joined the Covenant-breakers, died in obscurity and poverty, followed by his wife and his two sons; Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alíy-i-Jahrúmí, Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Shírázíy-i-Khurṭúmí and Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn-i-Káshání, who represented the arch-breaker of the Covenant in Persia, India and Egypt, failed utterly in their missions; whilst the greedy and conceited Ibráhím-i-Khayru'lláh , who had chosen to uphold the banner of his rebellion in America for no less than twenty years, and who had the temerity to denounce, in writing, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His "false teachings, His misrepresentations of Bahaism, His dissimulation," and to stigmatize His visit to America as "a death-blow" to the "Cause of God," met his death soon after he had uttered these denunciations, utterly abandoned and despised by the entire body of the members of a community, whose founders he himself had converted to the Faith, and in the very land that

bore witness to the multiplying evidences of the established ascendancy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Whose authority he had, in his later years, vowed to uproot.

As to those who had openly espoused the cause of this arch-breaker of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant [Mohammad Ali Bahai], or who had secretly sympathized with him, whilst outwardly supporting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, some eventually repented and were forgiven; others became disillusioned and lost their faith entirely; a few apostatized, whilst the rest dwindled away, leaving him in the end, except for a handful of his relatives, alone and unsupported. Surviving ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by almost twenty years, he who had so audaciously affirmed to His face that he had no assurance he might outlive Him, lived long enough to witness the utter bankruptcy of his cause, leading meanwhile a wretched existence within the walls of a Mansion that had once housed a crowd of his supporters; was denied by the civil authorities, as a result of the crisis he had after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing foolishly precipitated, the official custody of his Father’s Tomb ; was compelled, a few years later, to vacate that same Mansion , which, through his flagrant neglect, had fallen into a dilapidated condition; was stricken with paralysis which crippled half his body; lay bedridden in pain for months before he died; and was buried according to Muslim rites, in the immediate vicinity of a local Muslim shrine, his grave remaining until the present day devoid of even a tombstone—a pitiful reminder of the hollowness of the claims he had advanced, of the depths of infamy to which he had sunk, and of the severity of the retribution his acts had so richly merited.



Comments

No comments.

March 16. On this date in 1867, fifty-three Bahá'ís in Shushtar petitioned the United States Congress to ameliorate the exile of Bahá'u'lláh, who at that time had been in Edirne for four years.

Published on: March 12, 2026

March 16. On this date in 1867, fifty-three Bahá'ís in Shushtar petitioned the United States Congress to ameliorate the exile of Bahá'u'lláh, who at that time had been in Edirne for four years.

> Consequently, we agreed to present and describe the situation of that wise man to the Congress of the Republic that perchance God may grant Him relief and deliverance and that you may render help and find a way to bring that oppressed person relief from tyranny and oppression.

Comments

No comments.

March 17. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi stated "... International Executive ... is but a step leading to the Bahá'í world government of the future, and hence should not be identified with either the institution of the Guardianship or that of the International House of Justice."

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On this date in 1934, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated, "As regards the International Executive referred to by the Guardian in his 'Goal of a New World Order ', it should be noted that this statement refers by no means to the Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, but simply to that world government which will herald the advent and lead to the final establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh . The formation of this International Executive, which corresponds to the executive head or board in present-day national governments, is but a step leading to the Bahá'í world government of the future, and hence should not be identified with either the institution of the Guardianship or that of the International House of Justice."

March 17. On this date in 1934, a letter written to an individual believer on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated...

> "As regards the International Executive referred to by the Guardian in his 'Goal of a New World Order ', it should be noted that this statement refers by no means to the Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, but simply to that world government which will herald the advent and lead to the final establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh . The formation of this International Executive, which corresponds to the executive head or board in present-day national governments, is but a step leading to the Bahá'í world government of the future, and hence should not be identified with either the institution of the Guardianship or that of the International House of Justice."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 17, 1934)

Comments

No comments.

Baha'i History - March 17. On this date in 1985, Julius Edwards, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Northern Territories Protectorate, died.

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On this date in 1985, Julius Edwards , a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Northern Territories Protectorate , died.

Julius was born in Cannon Hall District in St. Mary's, Jamaica, on January 2, 1902. He was active in the field of civil rights prior to becoming a Bahá’í, co-founding the Jamaica Economic-Socio Society, serving as chairman of the Universal Negro Improvement Association , acting as adviser to two Prime Ministers of Jamaica, and serving as Marcus Garvey 's personal secretary. He became a Bahá’í after being introduced to the Faith by William Mitchell, and began actively teaching the Faith in Jamaica, especially in Spanishtown, and also abroad in neighboring El Salvador. In his career, he worked as a tailor.

In 1953, at the opening of the Ten Year Crusade , Julius answered Shoghi Effendi's call for pioneers to areas that had not yet been opened to the Faith departing Kingstown on August 29, 1953, and arriving in the Northern Territories Protectorate, within the British colony of the Gold Coast, on September 29, 1953. He lived in Tamale where he was able to convert three locals to the Faith, and also taught in Kumasi, but he was unable to secure permission to remain in the country for an extended time and pioneered to Liberia after only three months.

In 1956 he was honored with a certificate of decoration signed by the President of Liberia, William Tubman , appointing him Knight Official of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption, and Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga noted that the President had a favorable opinion of the Faith through his introduction by Edwards. In 1960 he married Vera Keens-Douglas of Grenada who he had introduced to the Faith in Monrovia, and she assisted him in teaching in Liberia.

In December 1979 the Edwards moved from Liberia for Grenada, arriving in February 1980, and they served the Grenada Bahá’í community. Vera died on November 19,

1981, and Julius died four years later, on March 17, 1985. The Universal House of Justice conveyed the following message after his death:

> GRIEVED PASSING JULIUS A. G. EDWARDS EARLY BELIEVER JAMAICA KNIGHT BAHAULLAH NORTHERN TERRITORIES PROTECTORATE AND PIONEER TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS LIBERIA. HIS LONG RECORD SERVICES AFRICA CARIBBEAN HAVE ENRICHED ANNALS CAUSE. KINDLY CONVEY FAMILY CONDOLENCES ASSURANCE PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Comments

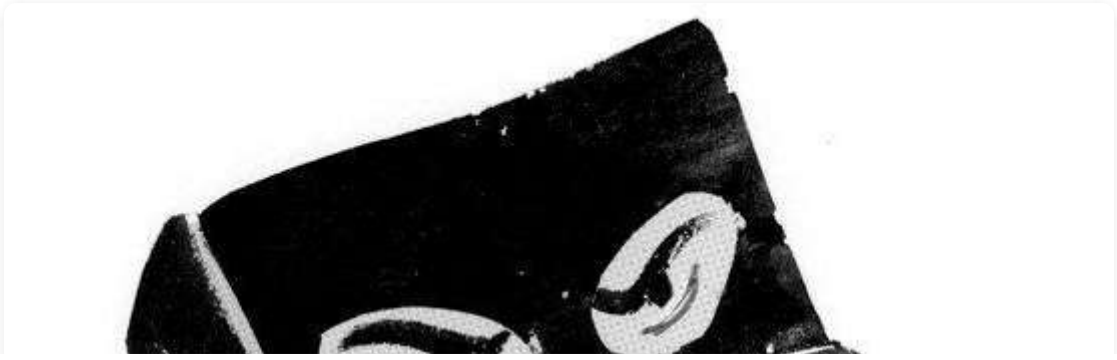
No comments.

March 17. On this date in 1988, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The House of Justice has not felt that it is feasible as yet to exempt Bahá'í scholars from the process of review for their general publications."

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On this date in 1988, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The House of Justice has not felt that it is feasible as yet to exempt Bahá'í scholars from the process of review for their general publications."

> The House of Justice has not felt that it is feasible as yet to exempt Bahá'í scholars from the process of review for their general publications. There are two reasons for this. Although there are Bahá'í scholars who have a profound understanding of the Cause and would not misrepresent or distort it in their writings, there are, alas, some who, while having academic qualifications in a certain area are, at the same time, seriously deficient in their knowledge of the teachings. The writings of such authors, if published without review, could mislead the general public, and the very fact that they were recognized academics would give added seriousness to the errors that they would propagate at this stage of the development of the Faith. Moreover, the House of Justice feels that it would not be wise, at this juncture, to have a list of reliable Bahá'í scholars who would not be subject to review as distinct from all other believers. (From a letter dated 17 March 1988 to an individual believer)



Comments

No comments.

March 17. On this date in 1957, a letter wrote "the Guardian wishes to know if they are residents of Germany, or Persians traveling in Germany...if they actually are Persian residents, traveling in Europe, then they will have to go on the Persian list... Also please advise what their background is!

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On this date in 1957, a letter from Shoghi Effendi to German Bahá'ís wrote "the Guardian wishes to know if they are residents of Germany, or Persians traveling in Germany, or there only for a short time. When did they arrive, and what are their plans. The purpose of this information is that if they actually are Persian residents, traveling in Europe, then they will have to go on the Persian list, and come when their turn comes there. If they are permanently residing in Germany, then the situation is different....P.S. Also please advise what their background is!"

> 17 March 1957
>
> Dear Bahá'í Sister:
>
> ...So far as ... Mr. and Mrs. ... and children are concerned, the Guardian wishes to know if they are residents of Germany, or Persians traveling in Germany, or there only for a short time. When did they arrive, and what are their plans.
>
> The purpose of this information is that if they actually are Persian residents, traveling in Europe, then they will have to go on the Persian list, and come when their turn comes there. If they are permanently residing in Germany, then the situation is different....
>
> P.S. Also please advise what their background is!

Comments

No comments.

March 17. On this date in 1924, Robert ‘Pat’ E. Moul was born. An America Baha’i who pioneered to Alaska, American Samoa and Hawa'ii, he served as the first Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska. His nickname was Pat because he was born on St. Patrick's Day.

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On this date in 1924, Robert ‘Pat’ E. Moul was born. An America Baha’i who pioneered to Alaska, American Samoa and Hawa'ii, he served as the first Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska. His nickname was Pat because he was born on St. Patrick's Day.

Comments

No comments.

March 17. On the date in 1879, Hájí Siyyid Muhammad-Hasan, the 'King of Martyrs', and Hájí Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn, the 'Beloved of Martyrs' were executed on the orders of Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir.

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On the date in 1879, Hájí Siyyid Muhammad-Hasan , the 'King of Martyrs', and Hájí Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn , the 'Beloved of Martyrs' were executed on the orders of Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir.

Comments

No comments.

March 17. On this date in 1919, Joy Stevenson was born. She would serve on the NSA of Australia, as a Continental Counsellor for Australasia, and as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre for ten years from May 19, 1988 to 1998.

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On this date in 1919, Joy Stevenson was born. She would serve on the NSA of Australia, as a Continental Counsellor for Australasia, and as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre for ten years from May 19, 1988 to 1998.

Marion "Joy" Stevenson was born on March 17, 1919.

The first two children's camps at the Yerrinbool School were organized by John and Joy Stevenson, Madge Painter and John Milne in 1963 and 1964. The site of the summer school in the small village of Yerrinbool was purchased by "Stanley and Mariette Bolton, for the purpose of holding Bahá'í summer schools" and officially opened on May 2, 1937 by "one hundred delegates and observers attending the national Bahá'í convention in Sydney ...[who] "traveled down the winding Mittagong Road to the small village of Yerrinbool."

The first Bahá'í House of Worship to be raised in the Antipodes, located in Ingleside, New South Wales in the northern suburbs of Sydney, Australia was dedicated on September 17, 1961. In her description of the inaugural service which concluded the ceremony of the opening of the Temple, Stevenson quotes the words of Rúḥíyyih Khánum who warmly welcomed everyone from all religious backgrounds to offer prayers in the newly-constructed Temple.

She served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, and as a Continental Counsellor for Australasia, and an Auxiliary Board member in Australasia.

In 1985 she was a Trustee of the Continental Fund and one of nineteen Continental Counselors for Asia.

When the Universal House of Justice increased the number of Counsellor members to serve on the International Teaching Centre for a five-year term to begin on May 23, 1988, Joy Stevenson was appointed along with Dr. Farzam Arbab, Dr. Magdalene Carney, Hartmut Grossmann, Mas'ud Khamsi, Lauretta King, Donald Rogers, Isobel Sabri and Peter Vuyiya.

She died in Queanbeyan, Australia, on April 25, 2016. When she died the Universal House of Justice requested that Baha'i communities around the world convene "commemorative gatherings in her honour."

Comments

No comments.

March 17. On this date in 2016, Kannabran Rajagopal died. He pioneered to Southeast Asia where he served as an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection as well as a member of the NSA of Laos.

Published on: March 16, 2026

March 17. On this date in 2016, Kannabran Rajagopal died. He pioneered to Southeast Asia where he served as an Auxiliary Board Member for Protection as well as a member of the NSA of Laos.

Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 1911, Oothout Zabriskie Whitehead, known as "O.Z." or "Zebby", an American film and stage actor who authored several volumes of biographical sketches of early members of the Bahá'í Faith, was born in New York City.

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 1911, Oothout Zabriskie Whitehead , known as "O.Z." or "Zebby", an American film and stage actor who authored several volumes of biographical sketches of early members of the Bahá'í Faith, was born in New York City.

Oothout Zabriskie Whitehead was born on March 18, 1911, in New York City. As a child he was fascinated by films and the theatre and decided to make his career as an actor after his father took him to see Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan in *The Kid* in 1921. After years in stage, film and television Whitehead struggled in the Hollywood Studio system due to being a pacifist in World War II and became dissatisfied with the roles he was given.

In his career he was a stage and film character actor, and was one of the longest surviving members of John Ford's "stock company" of character actors. His best-known part was as Al in Ford's 1940 adaptation of *The Grapes of Wrath* .

O.Z. Whitehead first heard of the Bahá'í Faith in 1949, and at his first informational meeting on the religion he heard Marzieh Gail speak. He became a Bahá'í in late 1950, and began giving public talks on the religion throughout the 1950's, for example at World Religion Day observances. In 1955 Whitehead went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In 1963 he attended the first Bahá'í World Congress in London, after which he pioneered to Ireland which allowed him to take advantage of Dublin theatrical opportunities. Whitehead was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dublin and in 1972, along with Adib Taherzadeh , he was elected to the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly of Ireland on which he served for fifteen years.

From about 1973 until the end of his life Whitehead devoted much of his time to the concerns of the religion including work resulting in publishing three books collecting biographies of early Bahá'ís while in his 6th decade but he also supported the Irish Actors' Equity and the Screen Actors' Guild and served on the executive of the Irish branch of PEN, the international writers' club.

Although he never married, he was in a long-term and very private relationship with actress Katharine Hepburn. The couple met through Dick Hepburn, who studied at Harvard University with Whitehead. After they agreed to part, Whitehead was never known to be in another relationship.

O.Z. Whitehead died of cancer in Dublin, Ireland, on July 29, 1998, at the age of 87.

Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 1974, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking "for the Bahá'í viewpoint on euthanasia and on the removal of life support in medical cases where physiological interventions prolong life in disabling illnesses."

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 1974, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking "for the Bahá'í viewpoint on euthanasia and on the removal of life support in medical cases where physiological interventions prolong life in disabling illnesses."

> Extraordinary means to extend a life may be permissible with a doctor's advice and if it is not a cause of injustice. Regarding euthanasia, the Universal House of Justice has written:
>
> > We have received your letter of March 18, 1974 in which you ask for the Bahá'í viewpoint on euthanasia and on the removal of life support in medical cases where physiological interventions prolong life in disabling illnesses. In general our teachings indicate that God, the Giver of life, can alone dispose of it as He deems best, and we have found nothing in the Sacred Text on these matters specifically but in a letter to an individual written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary regarding mercy killings, or legalized euthanasia, it is stated:
> >
> > "...this is also a matter which the Universal House of Justice will have to legislate."
> >
> > Until such time as the Universal House of Justice considers legislation on euthanasia, decisions in the matters to which you refer must be left to the consciences of those responsible.
> >
> > Lights of Guidance, pp. 291-292

Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question about the meaning of the words on page 50 of the Seven and Four Valleys: This is a verse of the Qur'an which Bahá'u'lláh quotes; the word patron here means helper--in other words when God misleads a soul, he shall ..."

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question about the meaning of the words on page 50 of the Seven and Four Valleys: This is a verse of the Qur'an which Bahá'u'lláh quotes; the word patron here means helper--in other words when God misleads a soul, he shall find no other helper. You would find Sale 's translation and comments on the Qur'an helpful in getting at the story back of such verses as this one."

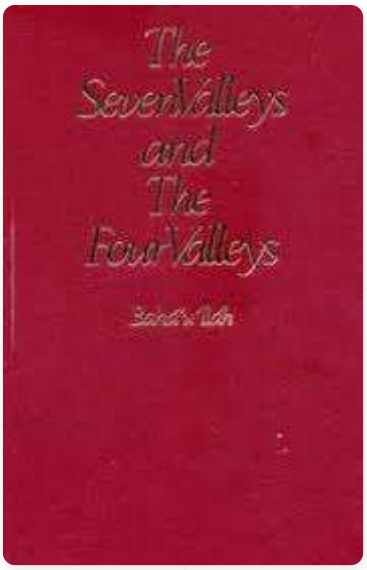
> 1613. Meaning of the Word "Patron" in Seven Valleys
>
> "Regarding your question about the meaning of the words on page 50 of the Seven and Four Valleys: This is a verse of the Qur'an which Bahá'u'lláh quotes; the word patron here means helper--in other words when God misleads a soul, he shall find no other helper. You would find Sale 's translation and comments on the Qur'an helpful in getting at the story back of such verses as this one."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 18, 1946)

On July 10, 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is a disagreement among Oriental scholars relative to the exact date of the birth of Muhammad. You should refer to authorities on the subject, such as Sale , whose translation of the Qur'an has become almost classical."

> 1661. The Date of Birth of Muhammad is Unknown

"There is a disagreement among Oriental scholars relative to the exact date of the birth of Muhammad. You should refer to authorities on the subject, such as Sale , whose translation of the Qur'an has become almost classical."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939: Bahá'í News, No. 162, p. 5, April 1943)



Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 2012, the book Donde Brilla La Luz ("Where the Light Shines"), is published. The book is about the Bahá'í Faith and the impact that the Bahá'í House of Worship in Santiago, Chile is intended to have.

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 2012, the book *Donde Brilla La Luz* ("Where the Light Shines"), is published . The book is about the Bahá'í Faith and the impact that the Bahá'í House of Worship in Santiago, Chile is intended to have.

Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 1950, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated, "When you have made them true Bahá'ís, then take them to the community and let them be accepted. In this way they are protected from tests until their faith is really strong."

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 1950, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated, "When you have made them true Bahá'ís, then take them to the community and let them be accepted. In this way they are protected from tests until their faith is really strong."

> 833. Must Aid New Believers to Become "True Bahá'ís"--Then Introduce Them to the Community
>
> "...One of the best ways to teach is what the Americans call a 'fireside', in other words a little group of your friends in your own home, to whom you can introduce a few believers whom you feel would be congenial and help confirm them. When you have made them true Bahá'ís, then take them to the community and let them be accepted. In this way they are protected from tests until their faith is really strong."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 18, 1950)

Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 1976, the UHJ sent its Naw-Ruz Message announcing "completion (of) excavation (at) Mount Carmel preparatory (for) raising majestic center legislation God's Faith" noting "over two thousand five hundred cubic meters Pentelikon marble from Greece."

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 1976, the Universal House of Justice sent its Naw-Ruz Message announcing "completion (of) excavation (at) Mount Carmel preparatory (for) raising majestic center legislation God's Faith" noting "over two thousand five hundred cubic meters Pentelikon marble from Greece."

> Naw-Ruz Message 1976
>
> 18 MARCH 1976
>
> To all National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> ANNOUNCE DELEGATES ASSEMBLED NATIONAL CONVENTIONS GLAD TIDINGS COMPLETION EXCAVATION MOUNT CARMEL PREPARATORY RAISING MAJESTIC CENTER LEGISLATION GOD'S FAITH THAT SACRED SPOT, SIGNATURE ITALY FIVE AND HALF MILLION DOLLAR CONTRACT FOR SUPPLYING OVER TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED CUBIC METERS PENTELIKON MARBLE FROM GREECE AND FASHIONING THEREFROM THE COLUMNS FACINGS ORNAMENTATION BEFITTING MONUMENTAL BUILDING. DEEPLY MOVED ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE BELIEVERS ALL PARTS WORLD THIS CHALLENGING GLORIOUS TASK.' DEVELOPMENTS WORLD CENTER PARALLELED FURTHER UNFOLDMENT ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE CONTINENTAL NATIONAL LEVELS THROUGH RAISING NUMBER CONTINENTAL COUNSELORS TO

SIXTY-ONE BY APPOINTMENT THELMA KHELGHATI WESTERN AFRICA, WILLIAM MASEHLA SOUTHERN AFRICA, BURHANI'D-DIN AFSHIN SOUTH CENTRAL ASIA, HIDEYA SUZUKI NORTHEASTERN ASIA, OWEN BATTRICK AUSTRALASIA AND ADIB TAHERZADEH EUROPE, AUTHORIZATION BOARDS COUNSELORS APPOINT NINETY MORE MEMBERS AUXILIARY BOARDS, AND CALL FOR ELECTION AT RIDVAN 1977 OF SEVEN NEW NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES: TWO IN AFRICA, MALI WITH ITS SEAT IN BAMAKO AND UPPER VOLTA WITH ITS SEAT IN OUAGADOUGOU, TWO IN THE AMERICAS, THE FRENCH ANTILLES WITH ITS SEAT IN POINT-A-PITRE AND SURINAM AND FRENCH GUIANA WITH ITS SEAT IN PARAMARIBO, ONE IN EUROPE, GREECE WITH ITS SEAT IN ATHENS, AND TWO IN THE PACIFIC, THE NEW HEBRIDES WITH ITS SEAT IN PORT VILA AND THE MARSHALL ISLANDS WITH ITS SEAT IN MAJURO, THE LATTER BEING SUPPLEMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT OF PLAN. NUMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES THUS RAISED ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR FOLLOWING DISSOLUTION ACCOUNT LOCAL RESTRICTIONS NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EQUATORIAL GUINEA NEPAL. OF NINE HUNDRED FIFTY-THREE PIONEERS CALLED FOR SPECIFIC POSTS FOUR HUNDRED NINETY-TWO ALREADY SETTLED. ALSO FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-SEVEN OTHER PIONEERS PROCEEDED GOAL COUNTRIES. GREAT OUTFLOW INTERNATIONAL TRAVELING TEACHERS RECORDED. MOVED PAY TRIBUTE INDEFATIGABLE SERVICES HANDS CAUSE GOD PAST YEAR IN PROMOTING ABOVE SUCCESSES AND IN FIELDS TEACHING PROTECTION PRESERVATION PROCLAMATION AND LITERATURE FAITH AS WELL AS SIGNAL SERVICES INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER CONSTITUTING GREAT ACCESSION STRENGTH WORLD CENTER RELIEF BURDENS RESTING UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE. MIDDLE YEAR FIVE YEAR PLAN NOW OPENING WILL WITNESS GATHERING FOLLOWERS BAHA'U'LLAH EIGHT INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CONFERENCES DESIGNED GENERATE TREMENDOUS

IMPETUS PROGRESS PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENT WHOSE GOALS NOW LAGGING SERIOUSLY BEHIND. MOST PRESSING NEED FAITH THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE ITS MISSION REDEEM MANKIND IS FOR EVERY BELIEVER ALL ASSEMBLIES NATIONAL LOCAL CONCENTRATE ATTAINMENT GOALS PLACED BEFORE BAHA'I WORLD, PROMOTE PROCESS ENTRY BY TROOPS, ACHIEVE VAST INCREASE SIZE COMMUNITY INCREASE NUMBER STEADFAST SELF-SACRIFICING BELIEVERS DEDICATED CONFORM EVERY ASPECT THEIR LIVES HIGH STANDARDS SET SACRED TEXTS. THE FIELD IS VAST THE TIME SHORT THE LABORERS LAMENTABLY FEW BUT ON THE EFFORTS WE FOLLOWERS OF THE BLESSED BEAUTY NOW EXERT, ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE SUCCESSFULLY AND SPEEDILY PROCLAIM AND TEACH HIS MESSAGE TO OUR FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS, DEPENDS IN GREAT MEASURE THE COURSE OF HUMAN HISTORY IN THE DECADES IMMEDIATELY AHEAD.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 1992, Bahman Samandari, an Iranian Bahá'í, was executed for espionage. A letter from the government stated "Although he is Baha'i by birth, his indictment had nothing to do with his belief, and the verdict issued has taken its legal procedure and approved by High Court."

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 1992, Bahman Samandari , an Iranian Bahá'í, was executed for espionage. A letter from the government stated "Although he is Baha'i by birth, his indictment had nothing to do with his belief, and the verdict issued has taken its legal procedure and approved by High Court."

Comments

No comments.

March 18. On this date in 1910, Ameen U Fareed translated a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent to the Second Annual Unity Convention held in Chicago, Illinois. In 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled "God's avenging hand struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

Published on: March 17, 2026

March 18. On this date in 1910, Ameen U Fareed translated a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent to the Second Annual Unity Convention held in Chicago, Illinois. In 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled "God's avenging hand struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U. Fareed) was the son of Mirza Assad Ullah Fareed (who authored *The School of the Prophets*) and the nephew of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wife, Munírih Khánum. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter and had been active in promoting the Bahá'í Faith. He had also received a number of Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith, **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

> The following Tablet, sent by Abdul-Baha for this Convention was then read by Mrs. Eva Webster Russell:
>
> HE IS GOD!
>
> Through his honour Dr. Fareed,
>
> To the beloved of God in America.

Upon them be BAHA'O'LLAH-el-ABHA!

O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom!

Praise be to God! The infinite bounty of God hath resuscitated the whole world, and the East and the West have come united with the bond of the summons of God.

Today the call of the Kingdom of God hath reached the hearing of the far and near of all the continents of the world and the standard of the solidarity of Mankind is held aloft by the grasp of Divine Power.

The melody of the East has made joyous and happy the Western world, and the song of the West has penetrated the ears of the Eastern people.

From inception of the world until now there has been no uniting bond between Persia and America, and communication and correspondence never transpired between these two countries. Now consider what a joy and bliss have united these two regions in the shortest space of time! What a real and ideal tie hath bound these together! What spiritual communications have been revealed! And now is only the beginning of this early morn and this is only the result of the twilight preceding the dawn. Soon will the star of this unity shine forth and flood all the horizons with its light and perfect connection and real oneness be obtained in all the regions of the earth. But the speedy realization of these hopes is dependent upon this: That the beloved of God in the West shall arise in unison with perfect strength, girding the loins of endeavor in service and putting forth their greatest effort in the way of unity and love. They must not rest a moment nor take a breath of ease. Nay, rather, night and day must they be striving, working and serving! And with perfect severance, spirituality and the best intent and effort must they hasten to promulgate the Divine Teaching, and above all they must act according to the precepts and exhortations of His Holiness BAHA'O'LLAH, for in this cycle of BAHA'O'LLAH verbal confessions and acknowledgments, literal faith and certainty and external relations are of no avail. Nay, rather, the beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful must manifest such attributes and ethical conduct

as to embody and personify the teachings of BAHA'O'LLAH. They must promulgate the law of the Kingdom with deeds and not words. Thus may they become the quintessence of being, the signs of the Kingdom of God, standards of the Supreme Concourse. May ye be salutary water for the thirsty, an evidence of guidance for the seeker, protection and support for the helpless, a shelter and home for the wanderers, the treasury of the Kingdom for the poor; the source of hope and happiness for the disappointed; the remedy of the heart and soul for the ailing. May you manifest the utmost of kindness to the human race; to weep with him who mourneth and to laugh with him who rejoiceth; sympathizing with the helpless; in communion with the wanderer; a friend to the friend and foe.

O ye beloved of Abdul-Baha! The beloved of God and the maid- servants of the Merciful intend to found a Mashrak-el-Azkar in Chicago. They have sent to us numerous plans, that one may be accepted and the edifice be built accordingly. Now the funds must be accumulated, the land entirely paid for and the necessary preparations for building made and then the accessory matters considered. Therefore, make ye an effort and show ye zeal that the price of the land be fully discharged and the means for the edifice procured.

The beloved in the East are striving with heart and soul to contribute to the best of their ability, although the internal conditions of Persia have, during the last few years, been exceedingly disturbed. This revolution affected all conditions and walks of life. There has been no agriculture, no trade and no commerce; nay, rather, in all the provinces there have been political disputes and quarrels between the two parties, namely, the nationalists and the constitutionalists. Thus, they have been wholly occupied with their own affairs. Notwithstanding this, they have striven to contribute to the Mashrak-el-Azkar in Chicago according to their best ability, and they will never be found wanting! If Persia should obtain order, the beloved there will make a worthy contribution.

And I supplicate the Kingdom of God to aid and confirm you.

Upon ye be BAHA'O'LLAH-el-ABHA!

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

(Translated by Dr. Ameen U, Fareed, March 18, 1910.)

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah ."

Fast-Dwindling Band of Covenant-Breakers

Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah , within the cradle of the Faith, North America and Turkey, who demonstrated varying degrees, in the course of over thirty years, of faithlessness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

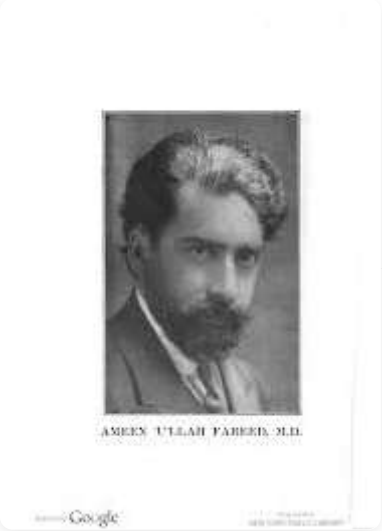
The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being **the most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate** in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.

The second, history will recognize as one of the **most perfidious among the kinsmen** of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who, **driven by ungovernable cupidity** , committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.

The third will be chiefly remembered by the **pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition** impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.

All three, however **blinded by perversity** , could not have failed to

perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.



Comments

No comments.

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Comments

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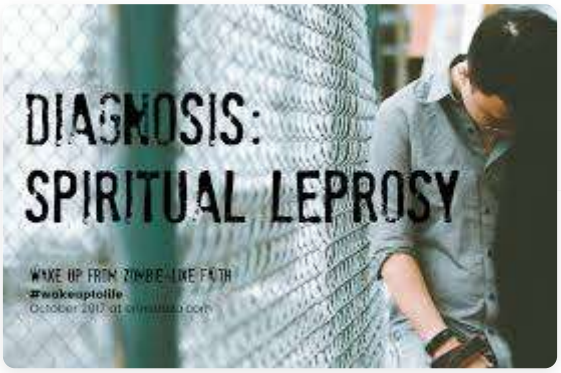
>
> (From a letter dated 19 March 1945 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)



Comments

No comments.

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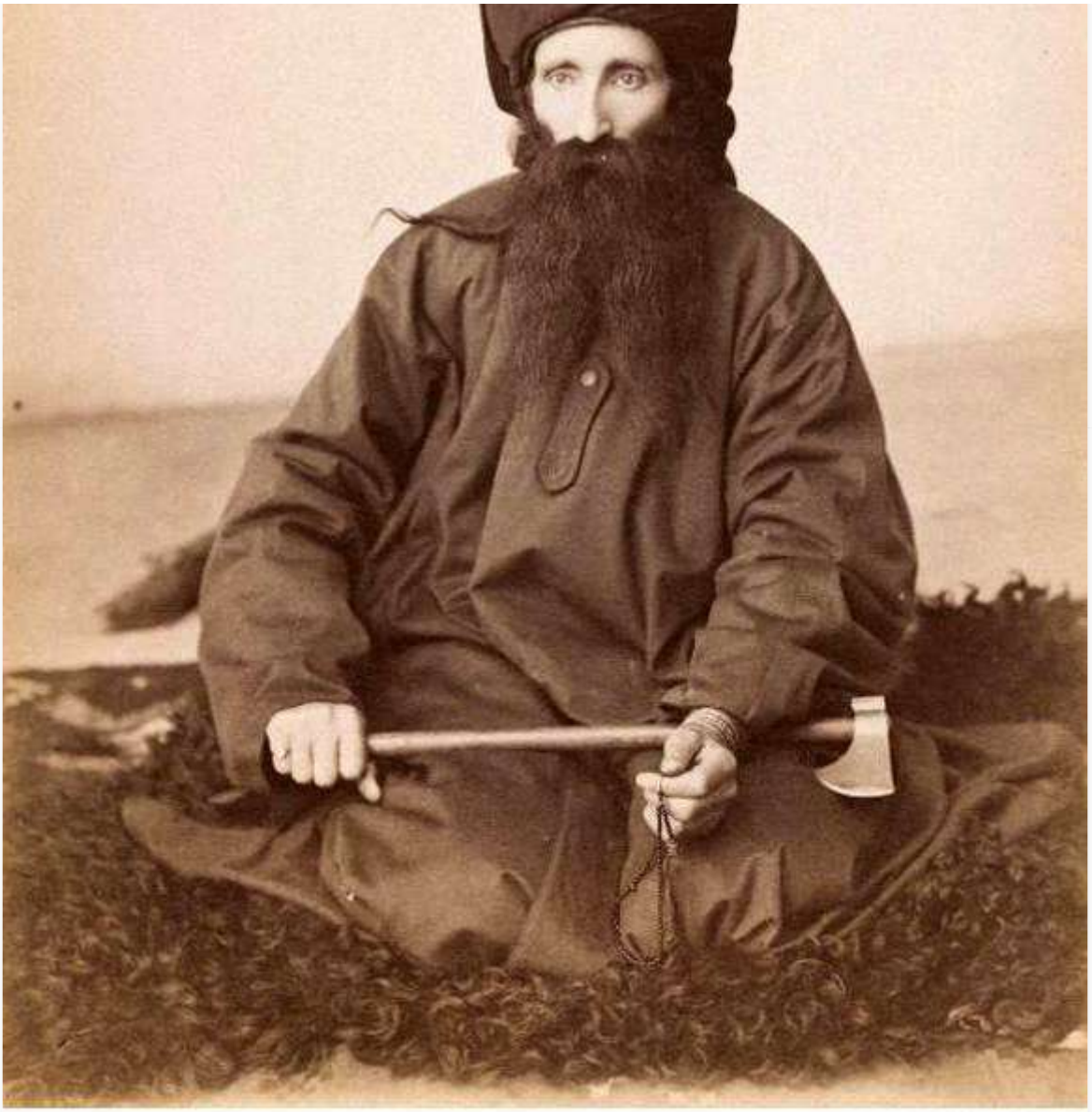

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Comments

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Louis Bourgeois , in his youth, worked as a clerk in a church contractor's office Trois-Rivières, Quebec, and through this experience planned the construction of the Church of Saint-Wenceslas in 1892. He then married Marie Gronville, who died young after having three children. His wife's medical bills caused him to go into debt, and thus he moved to Montreal to work as an apprentice sculptor in Napoléon Bourassa's business. Mr. Bourassa sent Louis Bourgeois to Paris, France to study, but during his time in Paris, Mr. Bougeois left his studies and traveled to other countries including Italy, Greece, Egypt and Iran.

He returned to North America in 1886, moving to Chicago, where he worked with Louis Sullivan. He then moved to California where he taught French to painter Paul de Longpré's daughters. He would then marry one of de Longpré daughters, Alice.

In the winter of 1906 to 1907, while he was in New York City, Louis Bourgeois became a Bahá'í after he learned about the teaching on the unity of religions. He then moved to Teaneck, New Jersey to expand the Bahá'í community there.

In 1920 Louis Bourgeois' design for the House of Worship in the United States was chosen by the delegates to the National Convention. During the next decade he spent much time constructing and financing the structure, despite bouts of ill health.

He died on August 20, 1930, at the age of 74, after a month of bad health.

The Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois was opened in 1953.

Comments

No comments.

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Paul Haney was born on August 20, 1909 to Bahá'í parents.

In 1946 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada. He represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States at the formation of Canada's independent National Spiritual Assembly in 1948.

He was named chairman of the NSA of the United States in 1950 and continued to serve in that capacity until 1957. On March 19, 1954, Paul Haney , chairman of the NSA of the U.S., was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi after Dorothy Baker was killed in a plane accident.

After the death of Shoghi Effendi on November 4, 1957 Paul Haney was elected to be a Custodian of the Holy Land, and he gave up his job in the United States to serve the Faith in this capacity. He lived in the Holy Land, but he also traveled to represent the Hands of the Cause at various national conventions, including the First World Bahá'í Congress in London's Albert Hall in 1963.

When the Universal House of Justice was elected, Paul was one of five Hands of the Cause elected as advisers. He also represented the Bahá'í World Center at diplomatic functions in Jerusalem.

He participated in the founding of the Continental Board of Counselors and the International Teaching Center in 1973 . He attended the four International Conventions that took place during his life, and chaired the opening session of the 1968 Convention. He passed away in Haifa on December 3, 1982 after sustaining

injuries in a car accident.

Comments

No comments.

March 19. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...to represent the Bahá'í Community: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his testament has appointed me to be the head of the universal council which is to be duly elected by national councils representative of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in different countries..

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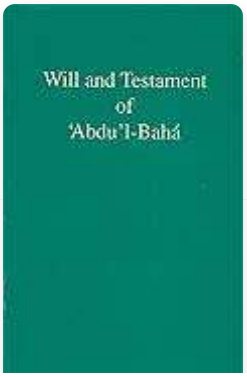
From Chapter 2 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum 's book titled *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith* , titled "'Abdu'l-Bahá's Acension and Its Consequences" ...

> His earliest letters reveal Shoghi Effendi's characteristic strength, wisdom and dignity. To one of the professors of the American University in Beirut he wrote, on March 19, 1922, clearly and unequivocally stating his own position: "Replying to your question as to whether I have been officially designated to represent the Bahá'í Community: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his testament has appointed me to be the head of the universal council which is to be duly elected by national councils representative of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in different countries..."



Comments

No comments.

March 19. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote Indian Bahá'ís regarding John Esslemont's book "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" that "A few days ago the Kanarese volumes reached him and he was very happy to see them; he has placed most of them in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh."

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> March 19, 1944
>
> Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era in Kanarese
>
> A few days ago the Kanarese volumes reached him and he was very happy to see them; he has placed most of them in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh and the others he has distributed to various Assemblies and Bahá'í libraries. He is eagerly awaiting copies of the various other translations your Assembly has undertaken, and in this connection he urges you again to persevere in your efforts to overcome every obstacle and get these further additions to your Bahá'í literature in India speedily out and in the hands of the newly-attracted souls.
>
> Achieved Mighty Victories
>
> The Guardian wishes to once again stress the immediate tasks which face your Assembly: the important--and almost miraculous--work achieved during the closing years of our first Bahá'í Century in forming so many Assemblies, most of them in virgin territory, should be carefully consolidated through travelling teachers, additional pioneers (if necessary),

extension of financial help, etc., so that none of them will be weakened and forced to revert to group status. Also the newly formed groups should be given every assistance to enable them to become Assemblies and take part in the administrative order of the Cause in India. He urges you to concentrate on these three things: the publication and distribution of the newly translated books; the firm consolidation of the new Assemblies; and the development of existing groups, that they may speedily achieve Assembly status.

Important as new teaching undertakings are they should not be given precedence at the present time until these other objectives are well on the way to being realized.

In closing let me assure you that the beloved Guardian cherishes the brightest hopes for the future development of the Cause there, and expects great things of the Indian believers in view of the truly remarkable tasks they have been accomplishing these last few years with such a spirit of zeal and devotion. His loving prayers are offered on your behalf and for your fellow-members of the N.S.A., that you may be blessed and guided always.

[From the Guardian:]

The achievements of the Indian Bahá'í Community during the closing years of the first Bahá'í Century have shed a great lustre on the record of their imperishable services ever since the inception of the Faith in their vast and promising country. Both in the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í activity they have assiduously laboured, nobly persevered, generously given of their resources, consistently collaborated, achieved mighty victories and raised to a new level the standard of Bahá'í stewardship. The field now stretching before them during the opening year of the second Bahá'í Century is vast and highly promising. The call is urgent, the opportunities priceless, the need of the waiting masses desperate, the machinery for the execution of the Divine Purpose already erected and vigorously functioning, the promise of signal victory clear and definite. A higher degree of administrative efficiency; a closer collaboration

> between the various elements constituting the organic Bahá'í Community; a greater measure of self sacrifice; a still more intensified exertion aiming at the consolidation and preservation of the newly constituted Assemblies and the rapid conversion of the existing groups into full-fledged Assemblies; a systematic, sustained and nation-wide endeavour for the purpose of disseminating the literature of the Faith, increasing its volume and adding to its diversity and lastly a more audacious and convincing presentation of its tenets to the masses of the people--these constitute the primary tasks facing now the Indian believers. That they may achieve their high destiny is my constant hope and fervent prayer.

John Esslemont was a prominent British Bahá'í from Scotland who authored the well-known introductory book on the Bahá'í Faith, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, which is still in circulation. He was named posthumously by Shoghi Effendi as the first Hand of the Cause he appointed, and as one of the Disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Born on May 19, 1874, John Esslemont appears repeatedly at key points in Bahá'í history. For example, at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

John Esslemont 's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

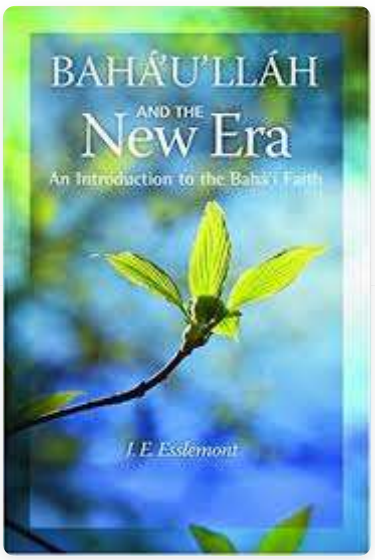
Other significant edits include...

> Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59)

concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts

were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

John Esslemont died in Haifa on November 22, 1925.



Comments

No comments.

March 19. On this date in 1850, the Báb began to write one of his final books, the Kitab-i-Panj Sha'n, which he completed on April 4, 1850.

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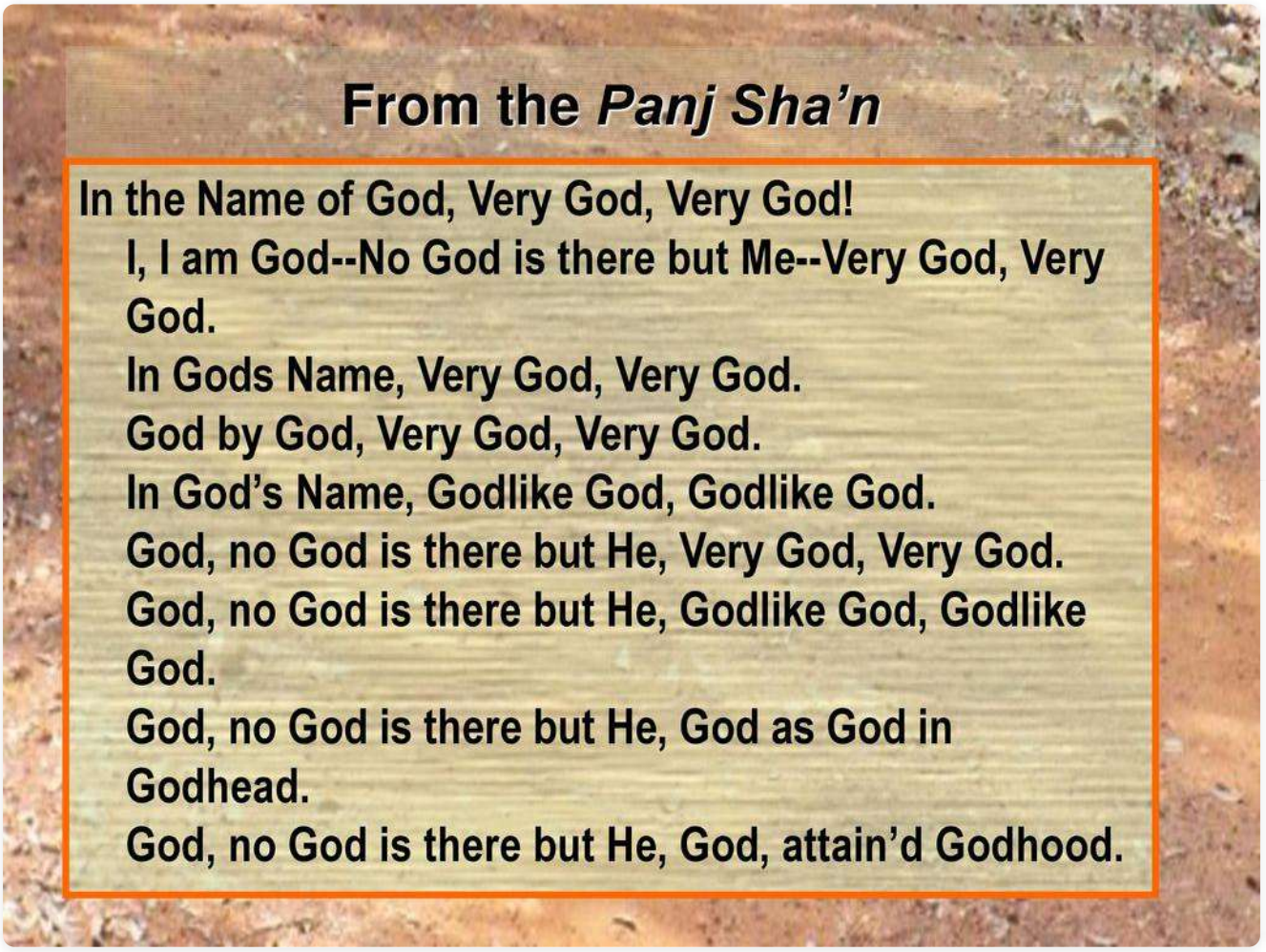
From the *Panj Sha'n*
In the Name of God, Very God, Very God!
I, I am God--No God is there but Me--Very God, Very God.
In Gods Name, Very God, Very God.
God by God, Very God, Very God.
In God's Name, Godlike God, Godlike God.
God, no God is there but He, Very God, Very God.
God, no God is there but He, Godlike God, Godlike God.
God, no God is there but He, God as God in Godhead.
God, no God is there but He, God, attain'd Godhood.

Comments

No comments.

March 19. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "When the true spirit of teaching, which calls for complete dedication, consecration to the noble mission, and living the life, is fulfilled, not only by the individuals, but by the Assemblies also, then the Faith will grow by leaps and bounds."

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Comments

No comments.

March 20. On this date in 1999, Keith Quigley died in Beverly Hills, California. She had pioneered to South Africa with her husband, Robert Quigley, who had served on the NSAs of South Africa and of the U.S. and as an Auxiliary Board member for Africa.

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 20. On this date in 1999, Keith Quigley died in Beverly Hills, California. She had pioneered to South Africa with her husband, Robert Quigley who served on the NSAs of South Africa and of the U.S. and as an Auxiliary Board member for Africa. He also collaborated with William Sears to produce audio-visual material, books, plays, and films related to the Bahá'í Faith.

Keith Gettinger was born in New York City on October 11, 1911.
After graduating from Barnard College she married Robert Quigley in 1941, with whom she had three children. Robert Quigley introduced her to the Bahá'í Faith, and they had three children. He enlisted in the US Navy in a non-combat role during WWII and served for three and a half years.The couple founded a television production company after he was discharged from the Navy. Robert wrote for the television programs College of Musical Knowledge in 1950 and Star of the Family in 1952. He also wrote for comedian and pianist Victor Borge.

In May 1956 the Quigleys went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he met Shoghi Effendi. A photograph of Robert and Keith in Haifa was published in the Westport Town Crier & Herald in June 1956. He decided to pioneer to South Africa while in the Holy Land to join his friends William and Marguerite Sears. In July 1956 a program on the Faith that Robert had written with William Sears was broadcast on WTTV, a non-commercial television station in Chicago. It included footage of the 1953 Dedication of the US House of Worship and footage of Robert interviewing Horace Holley.

Robert arrived in Africa in early 1957, and was joined by his family shortly afterwards.

He visited Zululand with William Sears and two African Bahá'ís to visit an isolated pioneer shortly after arriving in Africa. Sears wrote the following regarding the trip:

> "In order that we should not lose any teaching time, we took two of the African believers with us. In this way we had three hours of teaching on the way over, and three on the way back. Mr. Quigley rented the car and drove, and I sat and taught the boys. It was a thrilling trip for all of us, Mr. Quigley joining in on the teaching whenever he didn't have to duck a giant hole in the appalling roads."

The Quigleys lived in Johannesburg for four years with Robert serving on the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa and Auxiliary Board of Africa during their time there.

Robert resumed his career in television production after returning to the US in 1960 founding a production company with Merrill Heatter, Heatter-Quigley Productions, and they began developing game shows, most of which only ran for a short time. They were among the first to work on game shows after the 1950s rigged game show scandals, with Video Village being the first game show bought by CBS since the scandals.

Robert was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States as vice-chairman in 1963 and served on the body until 1968. In September 1963 he chaired a Baltimore World Peace Day Program. In February 1964 he gave a talk on the Faith in Africa attended by 200 Bahá'ís in Chicago, and in June 1964 he chaired a Race Amity Day observance in California. In 1965 he spoke on the impact of the Faith in Africa at a public talk in Evanston, Illinois. In June 1965 he taught at a Geyserville Youth Training Session and in September 1965 Robert and Keith hosted a Youth Victory Day celebration at their home in Beverly Hills. As of 1966 Robert was serving as Chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Beverly Hills.

In 1965 Robert created the game show Hollywood Squares with Merrill Heatter. It was passed on by CBS, but picked up by NBC, and Heatter and Quigley served as its executive producers from 1966 to 1980. In 1969 they produced a children's version of the program called Storybook Squares. They were nominated for the Primetime

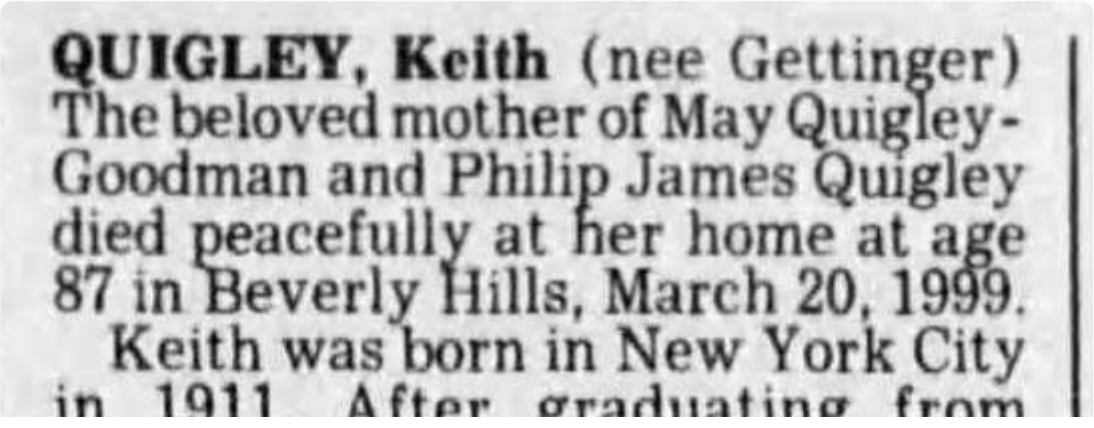
Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Daytime Programming for the program in 1969, 1972, and 1973, and for the Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Game Show in 1974. They were awarded the Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Game or Audience Participation Show for Hollywood Squares in 1975, 1978, 1979 and 1980, and were nominated for it in 1976, 1977, and 1981.

In 1968 Quigley and Heatter collaborated with Hanna and Barbera, planning to incorporate animated segments into a game show, the idea was abandoned but Quigley and Heatter received a production credit on Wacky Races which came from the idea. They continued to develop new game shows throughout the 1970's in addition to producing Hollywood Squares, the most notable of which were Gambit and High Rollers, game shows based on blackjack and dice rolling respectively. Robert retired in 1981.

Robert died on November 27, 1989 and was buried in Inglewood Cemetery, California, near the grave of Thornton Chase . The Universal House of Justice cabled the following after his death:

> DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING DEARLY LOVED ROBERT QUIGLEY. PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL HIS LONG YEARS CONSTANT DEVOTION CAUSE BAHA'U'LLAH DISTINGUISHED BY HIS OUTSTANDING, SACRIFICIAL SERVICES AS PIONEER AFRICA TOGETHER WITH HAND OF THE CAUSE WILLIAM SEARS AND HIS MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES. HUMOR WITH WHICH HE ENCOURAGED SERVICE AND LIGHTENED BURDENS OTHERS WARMLY REMEMBERED. ARDENTLY PRAYING PROGRESS

On March 20, 1999, Keith Quigley died in Beverly Hills, California.


QUIGLEY, Keith (nee Gettinger)
The beloved mother of May Quigley-Goodman and Philip James Quigley died peacefully at her home at age 87 in Beverly Hills, March 20, 1999.
Keith was born in New York City
in 1911. After graduating from

in 1941. After graduating from Barnard College, she married Robert Quigley, now deceased, an entertainer who in later years created and produced Game Shows, the most notable of which was "Hollywood Squares." They had three children and shared a strong commitment to their Baha'i Faith. That commitment took them to South Africa where they spent the late 50s spreading the Baha'i teachings in Johannesburg and Durban.

In addition to being a devoted wife and mother, Mrs. Quigley worked closely with her husband on game shows such as "On Your Account." She then became part of the team formed by the partnership of Merrill Heatter and Bob Quigley, serving as an associate producer on many of their early shows, such as: "Video Village", "Kideo Village", "Double Exposure", "People Will Talk", "Showdown" and "The Celebrity Game." She later carved out a career of her own becoming the producer on the "The Virginia Graham Show" and also developing movies of the week.

Her wit and character were cherished by many; but it was her unwavering faith, large doses of laughter and the love and warm closeness of her family that best

define Keith Quigley's life. She will be sadly missed by her children, May and Jim; four grandchildren, Robert Frederick Quigley, James Alexander Goodman, Christine Quigley-Manning and Julie Quigley-Brauer and five great-grandchildren, Alexandra Elizabeth Manning, Maxwell Phillips Manning, James Robert Brauer, William (Bo) Brauer III and Christine Elizabeth Brauer.

A private service will be held.

Comments

No comments.

March 20. On this date in 2007, an article titled "The Bahá'ís of the Caucasus" about the revival of the Bahá'í Faith in Azerbaijan noted "that more than 80% of Baku's Baha'is are converts, often Shiite Muslims in quest for spirituality at the moment of the break-up of the Soviet Union...."

Published on: March 20, 2026

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Comments

No comments.

March 20. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!"

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 20. On this date in 1949, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Karl Schuck stated that "the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!"

> 20 March 1949[to Dr. Karl Schuck]
>
> Regarding your book: he feels that this can only come under the heading, judging by the outline you gave him, of a romance woven about a historical episode: **the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!** He feels, therefore, that your book should be presented as such a romance, and not in any way as a historical narrative.
>
> There were many factors at work in releasing Bahá'u'lláh from the Siyah Chal, not the last of which was the intervention of His own sister who presented very valuable gifts to the Sháh himself while she interceded for her Brother's life. So you see your information-- not merely yours, any Bahá'ís at the present time--is far too scanty to permit of a really historical account being written. This does not mean you cannot get your book out as a romance. He certainly would not want you to destroy your manuscript!

On April 8, 1853, Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Baghdad subsequent to his arrest and exile from Iran in the aftermath of the unsuccessful assassination attempt by some Babis of the Shah . Bahá'u'lláh traveled from Iran accompanied with a representative of the Russian legation and an entourage of Russian guards.

From Helen S. Goodall, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and Ella Goodall Cooper's "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908," "Exile of Bahá'u'lláh"...

> When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the **Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf** , saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.
>
> **Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter,** and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.
>
> The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and * *an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.* * From Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh was sent to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, then to Akka--by force He was sent to the place where He desired to be, thus fulfilling the prophecies of all the Holy Books. He came by His own Will. Had He simply appeared and declared Himself there, the opposers might have said, "Of course, He has read the prophecies and determined to appear in the Holy Land in order to mislead the people." But we see that He used the natural instruments who thought they were sending Him there by force. This is

what we may call a real miracle.

After all, did the Shah accomplish his will, or did Bahá'u'lláh accomplish His Will?

From Nabil 's *The Dawn-breakers* , "Chapter XXVI Attempt on the Shah's Life, and its Consequences"...

The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Baha'u'llah under his protection, and invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for Iraq. Nine months after His return from Karbila, on the first day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1269 A.H., Baha'u'llah, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch and Aqay-i-Kalim, and **escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an official representing the Russian legation, set out from Tihran on His journey to Baghdad.**

In *God Passes By* , Shoghi Effendi alludes to the protection the Russian ambassador gave Bahá'u'lláh on different occasions, first after the attempted assassination of N aser al-Din Shah Qajar and again after the decision to exile Bahá'u'lláh from Iran, expressing his "desire to take Bahá'u'lláh under the protection of his government, and offered to extend every facility for His removal to Russia." In his Súriy-i-Haykal , Bahá'u'lláh included the *Lawh-i-Malik-i-Rús,* praising Czar Alexander II of Russia in these terms :

when this Wronged One was sore-afflicted in prison, the minister of the highly esteemed government (of Russia)—may God, glorified and exalted be He, assist him!—exerted his utmost endeavor to compass My deliverance. Several times permission for My release was granted. Some of the 'ulamás of the city, however, would prevent it. Finally, My freedom was gained through the solicitude and the endeavor of His Excellency the Minister. ...His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor—may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him!—extended to Me for the sake of God his protection—a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of

the foolish ones of the earth.

Comments

No comments.

March 20. On this date in 2008, an email asked the NSA of the US "how Kalimát Press might go about reestablishing its business relationship with the Bahá'í Distribution Service," which was suspended due to "an ideological agenda which is at variance with the spirit and interests of the Bahá'í Faith

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> Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly to Kalimat, 2008
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> The National Spiritual Assembly received your email message of March 20, 2008, inquiring as to how Kalimát Press might go about reestablishing its business relationship with the Bahá'í Distribution Service and with other agencies of this institution. Please pardon the delay in our response, owing to the high volume of work at the National Center, which in recent months has included preparations for the 100th Bahá'í National Convention.
>
> You have received several letters from the National Assembly and the Universal House of Justice which explain the reason for our decision in December 2005 that national and local Bahá'í agencies cease to distribute books and other items marketed by Kalimát Press. As the Supreme Body has written in its letter to you dated November 26, 2006, " **you have for many years pursued an ideological agenda which is at variance with the spirit and interests of the Bahá'í Faith; and Kalimát Press has been used as an instrument in its promotion** . Bahá'í

institutions have attempted in various ways to apprise you of this concern, but to no avail." In spite of the ample guidance lovingly provided over the years, the National Assembly has not observed from the tone and content of your communications that you have taken to heart the counsels received thus far and that you sincerely desire to rectify the problems identified by the Faith's institutions.

The National Assembly would be interested to learn your thoughts on this matter. However, **until it sees that you have understood the spirit of the concerns already expressed and demonstrate a genuine aspiration to change accordingly, the National Assembly cannot expect your future activities to differ from those of the past, and will thus have no cause to consider reestablishing its business relationship with Kalimát Press.**

Please be assured of our ardent prayers in the luminous Mashriqu'l-Adhkár that the Blessed Beauty may bestow upon you His wisdom and protection.

With heartfelt Bahá'í love,

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Comments

No comments.

March 20. On this date in 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated. Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings.

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March 20. On this date in 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i , who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb , visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated.

Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings. Under instructions from the Báb, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad , fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis.

They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí .

Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at the battle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849.

The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.

Comments

No comments.

March 21. On this date in 1910, the Star of the West published a letter from Charles Mason Remey to Corinne True stating "Since being here in Rangoon we have scarcely had time in which to sleep, so numerous have been our callers, the Truth seekers."

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From *Star of the West* , Volume 1, published March 21, 1910...

> A letter was received March 9th by Mrs. Corinne True of Chicago, from Mr. C. M. Remey , dated Rangoon, Burmah, February 7, 1910, in which he said: "Since being here in Rangoon we have scarcely had time in which to sleep, so numerous have been our callers, the Truth seekers." Also he said if they had no delays they would probably be in Port Said, Egypt, April 1st, and from there go to Acca.

Comments

No comments.

March 21. On this date in 1890, Ahmad Sohrab was born. He would serve as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when Horace Holley, member ...

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March 21. On this date in 1890, Ahmad Sohrab was born. He would serve as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter from 1912 to 1919, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie , formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when Horace Holley , member of the NSA of the U.S. and Canada , and the New York Spiritual Assembly attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," ultimately resulting in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-breakers around 1939.

On March 31, 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

On January 24, 1957, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly admonishing the Assembly that an unnamed individual "cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society ; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith ."

1394. New History Society--Avowed Enemies of the Faith

"As regards ..., he should be kindly but firmly admonished by your Assembly that he cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society ; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith ."

(From a letter of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 24, 1957)

Sohrab arrives in Frankfurt

Comments

No comments.

March 21. On this date in 1909, the remains of the Báb were interred in a special tomb, the Shrine of the Báb, erected for this purpose by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on Mount Carmel in Haifa.

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On July 11, 1850, the remains of the Báb were removed from the Tabriz, where he had been executed two days previous, and transported to Milan . The remains would subsequently be transported to Tehran, Isfahan, Kirmanshah, Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut and eventually Acre in 1899.

On March 21, 1909, the remains were then interred in a special tomb, the Shrine of the Báb, erected for this purpose by `Abdu'l-Bahá, on Mount Carmel in present-day Haifa.

It should be noted that the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas," revealed in 1873, forbids the "transport the body of the deceased a greater distance than one hour’s journey from the city" , which is why when Shoghi Effendi passed away suddenly at the age of 60 from the Asian flu in London where he was shopping for furniture and ornaments for the International Archives building, he was buried at the New Southgate Cemetery in London, far from the Bahá'í holy shrines in Israel. Not far from his grave in Southgate, however, rests Shoghi Effendi's niece Maliheh Afnan , the artist daughter of Ruhangiz Afnan , who Shoghi Effendi had declared a Covenant-breaker for marrying the son of Siyyid Ali Afnan, who 'Abdu'l-Bahá had declared a Covenant-breaker.

Comments

No comments.

March 21. On this date in 1844, William Miller had predicted that Christ would return to the Earth. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this Christian prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

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William Miller , a Baptist preacher, predicted that on March 21, 1844, Christ would return to the Earth. When this did not come to pass, he recalculated the date to October 22, 1844. Although the prophecy was not fulfilled, leading to what was called the Great Disappointment , the Millerites would go on to form the various Adventist churches .

Thief in the Night argues that Miller's interpretation of biblical prophecies for the signs and dates of the coming of Jesus were correct and fulfilled by the Báb who declared that he was the "Promised One" on May 23, 1844, and began openly teaching in Iran in October 1844.

Written by Hand of the Cause of God William Sears , a popular radio and television personality, *Thief in the Night* has been reprinted over twenty times by George Ronald Publisher , an official publishing house of the Bahá'ís Administrative Order . The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

What is interesting about these events in general is the manner in which individuals react. In the classic work of social psychology, *When Prophecy Fails,* Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken, and Stanley Schachter studied a small UFO religion in Chicago called the Seekers that believed in an imminent apocalypse. They describe the coping mechanisms after the event did not occur, and their findings have been generally

applicable to a wide variety of scenarios involving cognitive dissonance and true-believer syndrome.

Festinger describes the basic hypotheses of cognitive dissonance as follows (page 3):

1. The existence of dissonance [or inconsistency], being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance [or consistency].
2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.

Festinger and his co-authors conclude that the following conditions lead to increased conviction in beliefs following disconfirmation (page 4):

1. The belief must be held with deep conviction and be relevant to the believer's actions or behavior.
2. The belief must have produced actions that are difficult to undo.
3. The belief must be sufficiently specific and concerned with the real world such that it can be clearly disconfirmed.
4. The disconfirmatory evidence must be recognized by the believer.
5. The believer must have social support from other believers.

Festinger describes the increased conviction and proselytizing by cult members after disconfirmation as a specific instantiation of cognitive dissonance (i.e., increased proselyting reduced dissonance by producing the knowledge that others also accepted their beliefs) and its application to understanding complex mass phenomena. (pages 252-259)

When Prophecy Fails was published in 1957, the year that Shoghi Effendi died without having written a will as prescribed in Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Aqdas and without having designated a successor Guardian as stipulated in `Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament .

From the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paragraph 109 "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the

writing of a will. The testator should head this document with the adornment of the Most Great Name, bear witness therein unto the oneness of God in the Dayspring of His Revelation, and make mention, as he may wish, of that which is praiseworthy, so that it may be a testimony for him in the kingdoms of Revelation and Creation and a treasure with his Lord, the Supreme Protector, the Faithful."

From The Will And Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Part One, page 12 "O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—“The child is the secret essence of its sire,” that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another branch to succeed him."

Comments

No comments.

March 21. On this date, corresponding to the equinox, many prominent events in Bahá'í history occurred. An ancient holiday celebrated in diverse cultures, the vernal equinox is called Nowruz in Iran and adjacent cultures. In the Bahá'í context, Naw-Rúz marks the start of the calendar year.

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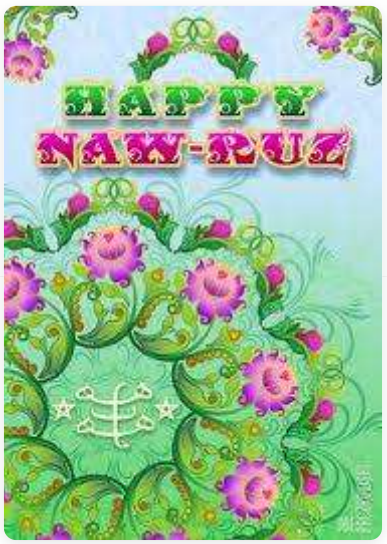
A few of the historical events that have happened on Naw-Rúz including the transfer of the remains of the Báb to Shrine of the Báb after 59 years in hiding in 1909: the opening of the first American Bahá'í Convention in 1909; the announcement of various Plans and Temple designs; and the release of the officially-sanctioned English translation of the *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas* in 1993.



Comments

No comments.

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To the Hands of the Cause of God throughout the World

March 21, 1958

Beloved Fellow-Hands:

Daily our thoughts and our prayers have been with you since we separated from each other after our great ordeal at Bahji We know your thoughts and loving prayers have surrounded us as we struggle to meet the problems here at the World Centre and to find our way in service at so critical and heart-rending a time in the history of our beloved Faith.

It is being increasingly borne in upon us from news received here as well as the reports of those of us who have been out in the Bahá'í world to serve and returned again, such as Ruhiyyih Khanum, Jalal Khazeh, Paul Haney and Shu'a'u'llah 'Ala'i that the only possible way the work of this holy Faith, which our beloved Guardian inspired, organized and brought to such a high level, can be maintained and further consolidated, is by focusing both the consciousness of the believers and the work of the Cause of God upon its World Spiritual and Administrative Centre. The strength of

a wheel and its power to roll forward are entirely dependent upon the hub, and the solidity of the spokes united in the hub. We have come to see that the supreme work of the Hands-all twenty-seven of them-is to maintain this focal Centre of Unity in the Holy Land at this dangerous time the Faith is passing through. There exists no other instrument for this purpose except ourselves.

As you can well imagine it has been a very trying time. The work is so sacred, the burden of responsibility so heavy on each Hand everywhere in the world-how much more here on the nine Custodians seeking to shoulder on behalf of all the Hands some of those tasks our dearly loved Guardian carried out to such perfection! Slowly we have been able to get our work organized and daily a stronger pattern is emerging. We feel that to have nine here has not only a spiritual significance in itself but that it also greatly helps in making decisions as we get the benefit of the considered opinions of more of the Hands. There is also the influence on the morale of the believers all over the world which is exerted by their knowing that nine of us are constantly engaged in protecting and serving the interests of the Faith at its Heart. Unfortunately thus far it has not been possible to maintain this number at all times.

Of the permanent Custodians six are now here-Ruhiyyih Khanum, Amelia Collins, Jalal Khazeh 'Ali-Akbar Furutan Paul Haney and Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, as well as the alternate Custodian Ugo Giachery, Mason Remey has just left for Sydney. Hasan Balyuzi has not yet been able to arrange his business and family affairs (he hopes to do this within a few months), and Leroy Ioas has had to go to a sanatorium in Switzerland to treat a heart condition which has been developing for some time. He is better now and we hope to have him with us about the beginning of May. John Ferraby and Shu'a'u'llah 'Ala'i have been acting as substitutes, but as one is the British National Spiritual Assembly Secretary and the other the Chairman of the Persian National Spiritual Assembly, they have been forced to return to their posts where they were urgently needed. In a few weeks Ugo Giachery, will have to return to Europe en route to the Chicago Conference. We find that during the summer months we might even be reduced to six temporarily, in spite of the fact that 'Ali Muhammad Varqa will be coming to act as a substitute for some months. We feel you should know this because it has a direct bearing on the work all of us are doing and on our future plans.

Daily we are more convinced of the need for the Hands to not only be strongly represented here by nine resident Hands as much of the time as possible, but that increasingly during the coming years until the Universal House of Justice can be formed, the other Hands must be made free to travel and circulate amongst the believers, so that they can not only watch over and protect the Faith better, but ensure that an uninterrupted flow of spiritual life continues to pour out from the World Centre. The beloved Guardian was in his person the very heart of our Faith; we are but his most humble and inadequate servants, but the supreme function of the heart as the key organ of the whole must go on, and it is our duty at this time and ours alone to see that it does. There are many obstacles in the way of our accomplishing this, the two greatest being financial means and health. Some of the Hands are too frail to carry on heavy duties or travel. The funds of the Faith, already heavily committed, are not at the present in a position to support extensive travelling on the part of the Hands. We share these thoughts with you so that you can better understand our problems and the way the Custodians you have appointed see at least some of the urgent needs of the Faith.

From a recently issued statement of the American Hands and National Spiritual Assembly, from letters received regarding remarks made by some of the Asiatic and European Hands, it is becoming obvious that in a perfectly natural course of human events, and with no awareness of its perils, there has been a tendency for different interpretations of our present situation and different prognostications of the future to be made. At times such as this in history, when a firmly integrated organism is suddenly deprived of its pivot, there is a strong centrifugal force released, and we believe that the urgent and most sacred duty of the Hands now is to offset this process at all costs. We feel very strongly that unless we hear from you all about conditions in your areas in more detail and more frequently, we will not be able to discharge the heavy responsibilities you have given us.

The first step must surely be to think, to catch the vision of the Bahá'í world and its work as the Guardian himself saw it. Even those of us serving here at the World Centre-some of us privileged to have been guided by the Guardian himself-realize only now that he is no longer here, and we are forced to assume responsibility, how vast is the field and how tremendous the work required to preserve what has been

won and carry on what has not yet been finished, thus ensuring that our beloved Guardian did not lay down his life in vain, and that his work is accomplished. We feel a great adjustment in our thinking is required on the part of the Hands here and abroad; we must think deeply and quickly. The time is flying, and the need for action on a world scale constantly before us. The minds of National Spiritual Assembly members are focused on carrying on the work within the area of their own jurisdiction. Very much the same thing is true of the Hands, as during the beloved Guardian's lifetime they were called upon to discharge continental duties. Now with the sudden irreparable loss of our beloved Guardian the Hands are compelled to see the Bahá'í world as a whole, as he always did, to forget regional consciousness (although of course they will continue to watch over the work in their respective areas), and to think on behalf of Shoghi Effendi of the world needs, world protection, world consolidation of this mighty Faith. God forbid that we should fall short of our duty. How will we ever account to him who appointed us if we do?

We feel that as you associate with the various National Spiritual Assemblies in the discharge of your duties, you should constantly remind them of these things and help them to bear in mind that if they are a national body, say in Latin America, the spiritual health and entire future of what they love most in this world-the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh-depends not only on their own condition but on that of their counterparts in Europe, Asia or Africa, and that the tie binding them to those sister bodies passes straight through the heart of the Faith, through Haifa, its World Centre. To the degree to which the Bahá'í world begins to think this way, to just this degree will we Hands be able to protect it and hold it together until the House of Justice comes into being.

We feel that from now on the Hands of the Faith should consider arranging their personal affairs so that they may to as great a degree as possible be free to serve at the World Centre or throughout the Bahá'í world, travelling and inspiring the believers, and keeping before their eyes what we must first ourselves firmly grasp-the world picture of the Faith and its present needs. The question of finances must naturally be considered but we believe that support will not fail if the believers behold in the Hands those spiritual qualities commensurate with the high station conferred upon them as stewards of the Faith. We believe that there would be a great advantage gained in having Hands from one continent visit another continent. We all know the

impetus a local community receives through outside visitors. The effect is infinitely greater if the visitor is a Hand of the Faith. Let us therefore ponder these things, reorient our thinking, and reorient it quickly. After the ascension of the Guardian, we are still in a state of shock. Neither our enemies nor any doubters there may be in our midst have yet rallied their forces. The love of the friends for their beloved Guardian has welled up a mighty flow of devotion and determination to carry on his plans. The iron is hot, and if we do not strike now, we Hands may never as long as we live have another opportunity like this. We believe this is a formative moment in both Bahá'í and world history. The five Intercontinental Conferences offer the unique opportunity to inspire and set afire the believers. This was one of the purposes of the Guardian in calling for them, and we must utilize them to the full, to raise up a new spirit of consecration which in turn will stimulate an increasing flow of pioneers and larger sums to carry on the work before us. We hope you will do all you can to encourage the friends to attend them and that those of you who are present yourselves will do your best to keep the discussion on a high spiritual plane and focus on the work to be done during die next five years. It seems to us that what has happened historically-the passing of the Guardian and his leaving no Will-has placed the Bahá'ís in a position which no mere intellectual approach can either mitigate or solve. Spiritual forces alone, resignation to the will of God, prayer, consecration, self-sacrifice, devotion, can carry us forward through this period.

We want you to know that in a most remarkable way the problems connected with protecting various properties at the World Centre and in the Cradle of the Faith have been overcome. It is not wise as yet to write in detail as it might jeopardize what is being done, but we will report to you in full in November when we meet at Bahji The preservation of this Centre and those functions it can and must still fulfil in the absence of him who was the interpreter of the Word of God is, we believe, not only our supreme duty, but that of each one of you equally.

None of us can ever be the same after last November 4th. We must then ask ourselves what are we going to be from now on? What are the opportunities that lie before us? Not having our Guardian now in this physical world, we must cling the more tightly to each other, we the Hands he raised up for the protection of his work. Would that we were more adequate to meet the needs of this tragic hour!

To you, the closest kindred of our hearts, we send our love, and we pray for you all every time we visit the Holy Shrines, and daily as well.

Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

P.S. May we remind you that the text of this communication is addressed to the Hands alone.

Comments

No comments.

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Published on: March 20, 2026

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The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Further Consideration

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved co-workers:

Amid the reports that have of late reached the Holy Land, most of which witness to the triumphant march of the Cause, a few seem to betray a certain apprehension regarding the validity of the institutions which stand inseparably associated with the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. These expressed misgivings appear to be actuated by certain whisperings which have emanated from quarters which are either wholly

misinformed regarding the fundamentals of the Bahá'í Revelation, or which deliberately contrive to sow the seeds of dissension in the hearts of the faithful.

A Blessing in Disguise

Viewed in the light of past experience, the inevitable result of such futile attempts, however persistent and malicious they may be, is to contribute to a wider and deeper recognition by believers and unbelievers alike of the distinguishing features of the Faith proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. These challenging criticisms, whether or not dictated by malice, cannot but serve to galvanize the souls of its ardent supporters, and to consolidate the ranks of its faithful promoters. They will purge the Faith from those pernicious elements whose continued association with the believers tends to discredit the fair name of the Cause, and to tarnish the purity of its spirit. We should welcome, therefore, not only the open attacks which its avowed enemies persistently launch against it, but should also view as a blessing in disguise every storm of mischief with which they who apostatize their faith or claim to be its faithful exponents assail it from time to time. Instead of undermining the Faith, such assaults, both from within and from without, reinforce its foundations, and excite the intensity of its flame. Designed to becloud its radiance, they proclaim to all the world the exalted character of its precepts, the completeness of its unity, the uniqueness of its position, and the pervasiveness of its influence.

I do not feel for one moment that such clamor, mostly attributable to impotent rage against the resistless march of the Cause of God, can ever distress the valiant warriors of the Faith. For these heroic souls, whether they be contending in America's impregnable stronghold, or struggling in the heart of Europe, and across the seas as far as the continent of Australasia, have already abundantly demonstrated the tenacity of their Faith and the abiding value of their conviction.

Distinguishing Features of Bahá'í World Order

I feel it, however, incumbent upon me by virtue of the responsibility attached to the Guardianship of the Faith, to dwell more fully upon the essential character and the distinguishing features of that world order as conceived and proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. I feel impelled, at the present stage of the evolution of the Bahá'í Revelation, to state candidly and without any reservation, whatever I regard may tend

to insure the preservation of the integrity of the nascent institutions of the Faith. I strongly feel the urge to elucidate certain facts, which would at once reveal to every fair-minded observer the unique character of that Divine Civilization the foundations of which the unerring hand of Bahá'u'lláh has laid, and the essential elements of which the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá has disclosed. I consider it my duty to warn every beginner in the Faith that the promised glories of the Sovereignty which the Bahá'í teachings foreshadow, can be revealed only in the fullness of time, that the implications of the Aqdas and the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the twin repositories of the constituent elements of that Sovereignty, are too far-reaching for this generation to grasp and fully appreciate. I cannot refrain from appealing to them who stand identified with the Faith to disregard the prevailing notions and the fleeting fashions of the day, and to realize as never before that the exploded theories and the tottering institutions of present-day civilization must needs appear in sharp contrast with those God-given institutions which are destined to arise upon their ruin. I pray that they may realize with all their heart and soul the ineffable glory of their calling, the overwhelming responsibility of their mission, and the astounding immensity of their task.

For let every earnest upholder of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh realize that the storms which this struggling Faith of God must needs encounter, as the process of the disintegration of society advances, shall be fiercer than any which it has already experienced. Let him be aware that so soon as the full measure of the stupendous claim of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh comes to be recognized by those time-honored and powerful strongholds of orthodoxy, whose deliberate aim is to maintain their stranglehold over the thoughts and consciences of men, this infant Faith will have to contend with enemies more powerful and more insidious than the cruellest torture-mongers and the most fanatical clerics who have afflicted it in the past. What foes may not in the course of the convulsions that shall seize a dying civilization be brought into existence, who will reinforce the indignities which have already been heaped upon it!

The Onslaught of All Peoples and Kindreds

We have only to refer to the warnings uttered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in order to realize the

extent and character of the forces that are destined to contest with God's holy Faith. In the darkest moments of His life, under 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd's régime, when He stood ready to be deported to the most inhospitable regions of Northern Africa, and at a time when the auspicious light of the Bahá'í Revelation had only begun to break upon the West, He, in His parting message to the cousin of the Báb, uttered these prophetic and ominous words: "How great, how very great is the Cause! How very fierce the onslaught of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Ere long shall the clamor of the multitude throughout Africa, throughout America, the cry of the European and of the Turk, the groaning of India and China, be heard from far and near. One and all, they shall arise with all their power to resist His Cause. Then shall the knights of the Lord, assisted by His grace from on high, strengthened by faith, aided by the power of understanding, and reinforced by the legions of the Covenant, arise and make manifest the truth of the verse: 'Behold the confusion that hath befallen the tribes of the defeated!'"

Stupendous as is the struggle which His words foreshadow, they also testify to the complete victory which the upholders of the Greatest Name are destined eventually to achieve. Peoples, nations, adherents of divers faiths, will jointly and successively arise to shatter its unity, to sap its force, and to degrade its holy name. They will assail not only the spirit which it inculcates, but the administration which is the channel, the instrument, the embodiment of that spirit. For as the authority with which Bahá'u'lláh has invested the future Bahá'í Commonwealth becomes more and more apparent, the fiercer shall be the challenge which from every quarter will be thrown at the verities it enshrines.

Difference Between Bahá'í Faith and Ecclesiastical Organizations

It behooves us, dear friends, to endeavor not only to familiarize ourselves with the essential features of this supreme Handiwork of Bahá'u'lláh, but also to grasp the fundamental difference existing between this world-embracing, divinely-appointed Order and the chief ecclesiastical organizations of the world, whether they pertain to the Church of Christ, or to the ordinances of the Muḥammadan Dispensation.

For those whose priceless privilege is to guard over, administer the affairs, and advance the interests of these Bahá'í institutions will have, sooner or later, to face this

searching question: “Where and how does this Order established by Bahá’u’lláh, which to outward seeming is but a replica of the institutions established in Christianity and Islám, differ from them? Are not the twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship, the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, the institution of the national and local Assemblies, the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, but different names for the institutions of the Papacy and the Caliphate, with all their attending ecclesiastical orders which the Christians and Moslems uphold and advocate? What can possibly be the agency that can safeguard these Bahá’í institutions, so strikingly resemblant, in some of their features, to those which have been reared by the Fathers of the Church and the Apostles of Muḥammad, from witnessing the deterioration in character, the breach of unity, and the extinction of influence, which have befallen all organized religious hierarchies? Why should they not eventually suffer the self-same fate that has overtaken the institutions which the successors of Christ and Muḥammad have reared?”

Upon the answer given to these challenging questions will, in a great measure, depend the success of the efforts which believers in every land are now exerting for the establishment of God’s kingdom upon the earth. Few will fail to recognize that the Spirit breathed by Bahá’u’lláh upon the world, and which is manifesting itself with varying degrees of intensity through the efforts consciously displayed by His avowed supporters and indirectly through certain humanitarian organizations, can never permeate and exercise an abiding influence upon mankind unless and until it incarnates itself in a visible Order, which would bear His name, wholly identify itself with His principles, and function in conformity with His laws. That Bahá’u’lláh in His Book of Aqdas, and later ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will—a document which confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas—have set forth in their entirety those essential elements for the constitution of the world Bahá’í Commonwealth, no one who has read them will deny. According to these divinely-ordained administrative principles, the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh—the Ark of human salvation—must needs be modeled. From them, all future blessings must flow, and upon them its inviolable authority must ultimately rest.

For Bahá’u’lláh, we should readily recognize, has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal

principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá after Him, has, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth. Not only have they revealed all the directions required for the practical realization of those ideals which the Prophets of God have visualized, and which from time immemorial have inflamed the imagination of seers and poets in every age. They have also, in unequivocal and emphatic language, appointed those twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship as their chosen Successors, destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world.

Should we look back upon the past, were we to search out the Gospel and the Qur’án, we will readily recognize that neither the Christian nor the Islamic Dispensations can offer a parallel either to the system of Divine Economy so thoroughly established by Bahá’u’lláh, or to the safeguards which He has provided for its preservation and advancement. Therein, I am profoundly convinced, lies the answer to those questions to which I have already referred.

None, I feel, will question the fact that the fundamental reason why the unity of the Church of Christ was irretrievably shattered, and its influence was in the course of time undermined, was that the Edifice which the Fathers of the Church reared after the passing of His First Apostle was an Edifice that rested in nowise upon the explicit directions of Christ Himself. The authority and features of their administration were wholly inferred, and indirectly derived, with more or less justification, from certain vague and fragmentary references which they found scattered amongst His utterances as recorded in the Gospel. Not one of the sacraments of the Church; not one of the rites and ceremonies which the Christian Fathers have elaborately devised and ostentatiously observed; not one of the elements of the severe discipline they

rigorously imposed upon the primitive Christians; none of these reposed on the direct authority of Christ, or emanated from His specific utterances. Not one of these did Christ conceive, none did He specifically invest with sufficient authority to either interpret His Word, or to add to what He had not specifically enjoined.

For this reason, in later generations, voices were raised in protest against the self-appointed Authority which arrogated to itself privileges and powers which did not emanate from the clear text of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and which constituted a grave departure from the spirit which that Gospel did inculcate. They argued with force and justification that the canons promulgated by the Councils of the Church were not divinely-appointed laws, but were merely human devices which did not even rest upon the actual utterances of Jesus. Their contention centered around the fact that the vague and inconclusive words, addressed by Christ to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," could never justify the extreme measures, the elaborate ceremonials, the fettering creeds and dogmas, with which His successors have gradually burdened and obscured His Faith. Had it been possible for the Church Fathers, whose unwarranted authority was thus fiercely assailed from every side, to refute the denunciations heaped upon them by quoting specific utterances of Christ regarding the future administration of His Church, or the nature of the authority of His Successors, they would surely have been capable of quenching the flame of controversy, and preserving the unity of Christendom. The Gospel, however, the only repository of the utterances of Christ, afforded no such shelter to these harassed leaders of the Church, who found themselves helpless in the face of the pitiless onslaught of their enemy, and who eventually had to submit to the forces of schism which invaded their ranks.

In the Muḥammadan Revelation, however, although His Faith as compared with that of Christ was, so far as the administration of His Dispensation is concerned, more complete and more specific in its provisions, yet in the matter of succession, it gave no written, no binding and conclusive instructions to those whose mission was to propagate His Cause. For the text of the Qur'án, the ordinances of which regarding prayer, fasting, marriage, divorce, inheritance, pilgrimage, and the like, have after the revolution of thirteen hundred years remained intact and operative, gives no definite guidance regarding the Law of Succession, the source of all the dissensions, the

controversies, and schisms which have dismembered and discredited Islám.

Not so with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Unlike the Dispensation of Christ, unlike the Dispensation of Muḥammad, unlike all the Dispensations of the past, the apostles of Bahá'u'lláh in every land, wherever they labor and toil, have before them in clear, in unequivocal and emphatic language, all the laws, the regulations, the principles, the institutions, the guidance, they require for the prosecution and consummation of their task. Both in the administrative provisions of the Bahá'í Dispensation, and in the matter of succession, as embodied in the twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh can summon to their aid such irrefutable evidences of Divine Guidance that none can resist, that none can belittle or ignore. Therein lies the distinguishing feature of the Bahá'í Revelation. Therein lies the strength of the unity of the Faith, of the validity of a Revelation that claims not to destroy or belittle previous Revelations, but to connect, unify, and fulfill them. This is the reason why Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have both revealed and even insisted upon certain details in connection with the Divine Economy which they have bequeathed to us, their followers. This is why such an emphasis has been placed in their Will and Testament upon the powers and prerogatives of the ministers of their Faith.

For nothing short of the explicit directions of their Book, and the surprisingly emphatic language with which they have clothed the provisions of their Will, could possibly safeguard the Faith for which they have both so gloriously labored all their lives. Nothing short of this could protect it from the heresies and calumnies with which denominations, peoples, and governments have endeavored, and will, with increasing vigor, endeavor to assail it in future.

We should also bear in mind that the distinguishing character of the Bahá'í Revelation does not solely consist in the completeness and unquestionable validity of the Dispensation which the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have established. Its excellence lies also in the fact that those elements which in past Dispensations have, without the least authority from their Founders, been a source of corruption and of incalculable harm to the Faith of God, have been strictly excluded by the clear text of Bahá'u'lláh's writings. Those unwarranted practices, in connection with the

sacrament of baptism, of communion, of confession of sins, of asceticism, of priestly domination, of elaborate ceremonials, of holy war and of polygamy, have one and all been rigidly suppressed by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh; whilst the rigidity and rigor of certain observances, such as fasting, which are necessary to the devotional life of the individual, have been considerably abated.

A Living Organism

It should also be borne in mind that the machinery of the Cause has been so fashioned, that whatever is deemed necessary to incorporate into it in order to keep it in the forefront of all progressive movements, can, according to the provisions made by Bahá'u'lláh, be safely embodied therein. To this testify the words of Bahá'u'lláh, as recorded in the Eighth Leaf of the exalted Paradise: "It is incumbent upon the Trustees of the House of Justice to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He, verily, is the Provider, the Omniscient." Not only has the House of Justice been invested by Bahá'u'lláh with the authority to legislate whatsoever has not been explicitly and outwardly recorded in His holy Writ, upon it has also been conferred by the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and power to abrogate, according to the changes and requirements of the time, whatever has been already enacted and enforced by a preceding House of Justice. In this connection, He revealed the following in His Will: "And inasmuch as the House of Justice hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same. Thus for example, the House of Justice enacteth today a certain law and enforceth it, and a hundred years hence, circumstances having profoundly changed and the conditions having altered, another House of Justice will then have power, according to the exigencies of the time, to alter that law. This it can do because that law formeth no part of the divine explicit text. The House of Justice is both the initiator and the abrogator of its own laws." Such is the immutability of His revealed Word. Such is the elasticity which characterizes the functions of His appointed ministers. The first preserves the identity of His Faith, and guards the integrity of His law. The second enables it, even as a living organism, to expand and adapt itself to the needs and requirements of an ever-changing society.

Dear friends! Feeble though our Faith may now appear in the eyes of men, who either denounce it as an offshoot of Islám, or contemptuously ignore it as one more of those obscure sects that abound in the West, this priceless gem of Divine Revelation, now still in its embryonic state, shall evolve within the shell of His law, and shall forge ahead, undivided and unimpaired, till it embraces the whole of mankind. Only those who have already recognized the supreme station of Bahá'u'lláh, only those whose hearts have been touched by His love, and have become familiar with the potency of His spirit, can adequately appreciate the value of this Divine Economy—His inestimable gift to mankind.

Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions, who at present are witnessing with perplexity and dismay the bankruptcy of their ideas, and the disintegration of their handiwork, would do well to turn their gaze to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and to meditate upon the World Order which, lying enshrined in His teachings, is slowly and imperceptibly rising amid the welter and chaos of present-day civilization. They need have no doubt or anxiety regarding the nature, the origin or validity of the institutions which the adherents of the Faith are building up throughout the world. For these lie embedded in the teachings themselves, unadulterated and unobscured by unwarrantable inferences, or unauthorized interpretations of His Word.

How pressing and sacred the responsibility that now weighs upon those who are already acquainted with these teachings! How glorious the task of those who are called upon to vindicate their truth, and demonstrate their practicability to an unbelieving world! Nothing short of an immovable conviction in their divine origin, and their uniqueness in the annals of religion; nothing short of an unwavering purpose to execute and apply them to the administrative machinery of the Cause, can be sufficient to establish their reality, and insure their success. How vast is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh! How great the magnitude of His blessings showered upon humanity in this day! And yet, how poor, how inadequate our conception of their significance and glory! This generation stands too close to so colossal a Revelation to appreciate, in their full measure, the infinite possibilities of His Faith, the unprecedented character of His Cause, and the mysterious dispensations of His Providence.

In the Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh, wishing to emphasize the transcendent character of this new Day of God, reinforces the strength of His argument by His reference to the text of a correct and authorized tradition, which reveals the following: "Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest." And then immediately follow these confirming and illuminating words of Bahá'u'lláh: "Consider: He hath declared knowledge to consist of twenty and seven letters, and regarded all the prophets, from Adam even unto Muḥammad, the 'seal,' as expounders of only two letters thereof. He also saith that the Qá'im will reveal all the remaining twenty and five letters. Behold from this utterance how great and lofty is His station! His rank excelleth that of all the prophets, and His revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones. A revelation, of which the prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones have either not been informed or which, in pursuance of God's inscrutable decree, they have not disclosed—such a revelation, these vile and villainous people have sought to measure with their own deficient minds, their own deficient learning and understanding."

In another passage of the same Book, Bahá'u'lláh, referring to the transformation effected by every Revelation in the ways, thoughts and manners of the people, reveals these words: "Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself, both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestations would be apparent."

Did not Christ Himself, addressing His disciples, utter these words: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth"?

From the text of this recognized tradition, as well as from the words of Christ, as attested by the Gospel, every unprejudiced observer will readily apprehend the magnitude of the Faith which Bahá'u'lláh has revealed, and recognize the staggering weight of the claim He has advanced. No wonder if 'Abdu'l-Bahá has portrayed in

such lurid colors the fierceness of the agitation that shall center in the days to come round the nascent institutions of the Faith. We can now but faintly discern the beginnings of that turmoil which the rise and ascendancy of the Cause of God is destined to cast in the world.

The Greatest Drama of the World's Spiritual History

Whether in the ferocious and insidious campaign of repression and cruelty which the rulers of Russia have launched against the upholders of the Faith under their rule; whether in the unyielding animosity with which the Shiites of Islám are trampling upon the sacred rights of the adherents of the Cause in connection with Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdád; whether in the impotent rage which has impelled the ecclesiastical leaders of the Sunnite sect of Islám to expel our Egyptian brethren from their midst—in all of these we can perceive the manifestations of the relentless hate which peoples, religions, and governments entertain for so pure, so innocent, so glorious a Faith.

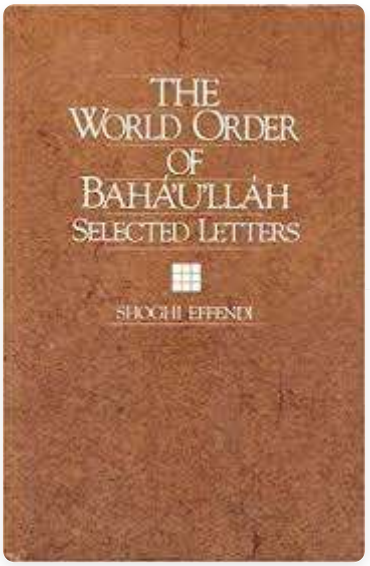
Ours is the duty to ponder these things in our heart, to strive to widen our vision, and to deepen our comprehension of this Cause, and to arise, resolutely and unreservedly, to play our part, however small, in this greatest drama of the world's spiritual history.

Your brother and co-worker,

Shoghi.

Haifa, Palestine,

March 21, 1930.



Comments

No comments.

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Published on: March 20, 2026

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The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh

To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada.

Friends and fellow-defenders of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh:

Significant as have been the changes that have lately overtaken a swiftly awakening humanity at this transitional phase of its checkered history, the steady consolidation of the institutions which the administrators of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are, in every land, toiling to establish should appear no less remarkable to even those who are as yet imperfectly acquainted with the obstacles they have had to surmount or the meagre resources on which they could rely.

That a Faith which, ten years ago, was severely shaken by the sudden removal of an incomparable Master should have, in the face of tremendous obstacles, maintained its unity, resisted the malignant onslaught of its ill-wishers, silenced its calumniators,

broadened the basis of its far-flung administration, and raised upon it institutions symbolizing its ideals of worship and service, should be deemed sufficient evidence of the invincible power with which the Almighty has chosen to invest it from the moment of its inception.

That the Cause associated with the name of Bahá'u'lláh feeds itself upon those hidden springs of celestial strength which no force of human personality, whatever its glamour, can replace; that its reliance is solely upon that mystic Source with which no worldly advantage, be it wealth, fame, or learning can compare; that it propagates itself by ways mysterious and utterly at variance with the standards accepted by the generality of mankind, will, if not already apparent, become increasingly manifest as it forges ahead towards fresh conquests in its struggle for the spiritual regeneration of mankind.

Indeed, how could it, unsupported as it has ever been by the counsels and the resources of the wise, the rich, and the learned in the land of its birth, have succeeded in breaking asunder the shackles that weighed upon it at the hour of its birth, in emerging unscathed from the storms that agitated its infancy, had not its animating breath been quickened by that spirit which is born of God, and on which all success, wherever and however it be sought, must ultimately depend?

It is not necessary for me to recall, even in their briefest outline, the heart-rending details of that appalling tragedy which marked the birth-pangs of our beloved Faith, enacted in a land notorious for its unrestrained fanaticisms, its crass ignorance, its unbridled cruelty. Nor do I need to expatiate on the valor, the sublime fortitude, that defied the cruel torture-mongers of that race, or stress the number, or emphasize the purity of the lives, of those who died willingly that their Cause might live and prosper. Nor is it necessary to dwell upon the indignation which those atrocities evoked, and the feelings of unqualified admiration that surged, in the breasts of countless men and women, in regions remote from the scene of those indescribable cruelties. Suffice it to say that upon these heroes of Bahá'u'lláh's native land was bestowed the inestimable privilege of sealing with their life-blood the early triumphs of their cherished Faith, and of paving the way for its approaching victory. In the blood of the unnumbered martyrs of Persia lay the seed of the Divinely-appointed Administration which,

though transplanted from its native soil, is now budding out, under your loving care, into a new order, destined to overshadow all mankind.

America's Contribution to the Cause

For great as have been the attainments and unforgettable the services of the pioneers of the heroic age of the Cause in Persia, the contribution which their spiritual descendants, the American believers, the champion-builders of the organic structure of the Cause, are now making towards the fulfillment of the Plan which must usher in the golden age of the Cause is no less meritorious in this strenuous period of its history. Few, if any, I venture to assert, among these privileged framers and custodians of the constitution of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are even dimly aware of the preponderating rôle which the North American continent is destined to play in the future orientation of their world-embracing Cause. Nor does any appreciable number among them seem sufficiently conscious of the decisive influence which they already exercise in the direction and management of its affairs.

"The continent of America," wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá in February, 1917, "is, in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide, and the free assemble."

That the supporters of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, throughout the United States and Canada, are increasingly demonstrating the truth of this solemn affirmation is evident to even a casual observer of the record of their manifold services, whether in their individual capacities or through their concerted endeavors. The manifestations of spontaneous loyalty which marked their response to the expressed wishes of a departed Master; the generosity with which they have, on more than one occasion, arisen to lend a helping hand to the needy and harassed among their brethren in Persia; the vigor with which they have resisted the shameless attacks which unrelenting enemies, both from within and without, have, with increasing frequency, launched against them; the example which the body of their national representatives have set to their sister Assemblies in fashioning the instruments essential to the effective discharge of their collective duties; their successful intervention on behalf of their persecuted fellow-workers in Russia; the moral support they have extended to

their Egyptian fellow-disciples at a most critical stage in their struggle for emancipation from the fetters of Islamic orthodoxy; the historic services rendered by those intrepid pioneers who, faithful to the call of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, forsook their homes to plant, in the uttermost corners of the globe, the standard of His Faith; and, last but not least, the magnificence of their self-sacrifice, culminating in the completion of the super-structure of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár—these stand out each as an eloquent testimony to the indomitable character of the faith Bahá’u’lláh has kindled in their hearts.

Who, contemplating so splendid a record of service, can doubt that these faithful stewards of the redeeming grace of God have preserved, undivided and unimpaired, the priceless heritage entrusted to their charge? Have they not, one might well reflect, in ways which only future historians will indicate, approached the high standard that characterized those deeds of imperishable renown accomplished by those that have gone before them?

Not by the material resources which the members of this infant community can now summon to their aid; not by the numerical strength of its present-day supporters; nor by any direct tangible benefits its votaries can as yet confer upon the multitude of the needy and the disconsolate among their countrymen, should its potentialities be tested or its worth determined. Nowhere but in the purity of its precepts, the sublimity of its standards, the integrity of its laws, the reasonableness of its claims, the comprehensiveness of its scope, the universality of its program, the flexibility of its institutions, the lives of its founders, the heroism of its martyrs, and the transforming power of its influence, should the unprejudiced observer seek to obtain the true criterion that can enable him to fathom its mysteries or to estimate its virtue.

Decline of Mortal Dominion

How unfair, how irrelevant, to venture any comparison between the slow and gradual consolidation of the Faith proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh and those man-created movements which, having their origin in human desires and with their hopes centered on mortal dominion, must inevitably decline and perish! Springing from a finite mind, begotten of human fancy, and oftentimes the product of ill-conceived designs, such movements succeed, by reason of their novelty, their appeal to man’s baser

instincts and their dependence upon the resources of a sordid world, in dazzling for a time the eyes of men, only to plunge finally from the heights of their meteoric career into the darkness of oblivion, dissolved by the very forces that had assisted in their creation.

Not so with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Born in an environment of appalling degradation, springing from a soil steeped in age-long corruptions, hatreds and prejudice, inculcating principles irreconcilable with the accepted standards of the times, and faced from the beginning with the relentless enmity of government, church and people, this nascent Faith of God has, by virtue of the celestial potency with which it has been endowed, succeeded, in less than four score years and ten, in emancipating itself from the galling chains of Islamic domination, in proclaiming the self-sufficiency of its ideals and the independent integrity of its laws, in planting its banner in no less than forty of the most advanced countries of the world, in establishing its outposts in lands beyond the farthest seas, in consecrating its religious edifices in the midmost heart of the Asiatic and American continents, in inducing two of the most powerful governments of the West to ratify the instruments essential to its administrative activities, in obtaining from royalty befitting tributes to the excellence of its teachings, and, finally, in forcing its grievances upon the attention of the representatives of the highest Tribunal in the civilized world, and in securing from its members written affirmations that are tantamount to a tacit recognition of its religious status and to an express declaration of the justice of its cause.

Circumscribed though its power as a social force may as yet appear, and however obvious may seem the present ineffectiveness of its world-embracing program, we, who stand identified with its blessed name, cannot but marvel at the measure of its achievements if we but compare them with the modest accomplishments that have marked the rise of the Dispensations of the past. Where else, if not in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, can the unbiased student of comparative religion cite instances of a claim as stupendous as that which the Author of that Faith advanced, foes as relentless as those which He faced, a devotion more sublime than that which He kindled, a life as eventful and as enthralling as that which He led? Has Christianity or Islám, has any Dispensation that preceded them, offered instances of such combinations of courage and restraint, of magnanimity and power, of broad-

mindedness and loyalty, as those which characterized the conduct of the heroes of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh? Where else do we find evidences of a transformation as swift, as complete, and as sudden, as those effected in the lives of the apostles of the Báb? Few, indeed, are the instances recorded in any of the authenticated annals of the religions of the past of a self-abnegation as complete, a constancy as firm, a magnanimity as sublime, a loyalty as uncompromising, as those which bore witness to the character of that immortal band which stands identified with this Divine Revelation—this latest and most compelling manifestation of the love and the omnipotence of the Almighty!

Contrast with Religions of the Past

We may vainly search in the records of the earliest beginnings of any of the recognized religions of the past for episodes as thrilling in their details, or as far-reaching in their consequences, as those that illumine the pages of the history of this Faith. The almost incredible circumstances attending the martyrdom of that youthful Prince of Glory; the forces of barbaric repression which this tragedy subsequently released; the manifestations of unsurpassed heroism to which it gave rise; the exhortations and warnings which have streamed from the pen of the Divine Prisoner in His Epistles to the potentates of the Church and the monarchs and rulers of the world; the undaunted loyalty with which our brethren are battling in Muslim countries with the forces of religious orthodoxy—these may be reckoned as the most outstanding features of what the world will come to recognize as the greatest drama in the world's spiritual history.

I need not recall, in this connection, the unfortunate episodes that have, admittedly, and to a very great extent, marred the early history of both Judaism and Islám. Nor is it necessary to stress the damaging effect of the excesses, the rivalries and divisions, the fanatical outbursts and acts of ingratitude that are associated with the early development of the people of Israel and with the militant career of the ruthless pioneers of the Faith of Muḥammad.

It would be sufficient for my purpose to call attention to the great number of those who, in the first two centuries of the Christian era, "purchased an ignominious life by betraying the holy Scriptures into the hands of the infidels," the scandalous conduct of those bishops who were thereby branded as traitors, the discord of the African

Church, the gradual infiltration into Christian doctrine of the principles of the Mithraic cult, of the Alexandrian school of thought, of the precepts of Zoroastrianism and of Grecian philosophy, and the adoption by the churches of Greece and of Asia of the institutions of provincial synods of a model which they borrowed from the representative councils of their respective countries.

How great was the obstinacy with which the Jewish converts among the early Christians adhered to the ceremonies of their ancestors, and how fervent their eagerness to impose them on the Gentiles! Were not the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem all circumcised Jews, and had not the congregation over which they presided united the laws of Moses with the doctrine of Christ? Is it not a fact that no more than a twentieth part of the subjects of the Roman Empire had enlisted themselves under the standard of Christ before the conversion of Constantine? Was not the ruin of the Temple, in the city of Jerusalem, and of the public religion of the Jews, severely felt by the so-called Nazarenes, who persevered, above a century, in the practice of the Mosaic Law?

How striking the contrast when we remember, in the light of the afore-mentioned facts, the number of those followers of Bahá'u'lláh who, in Persia and the adjoining countries, had enlisted at the time of His Ascension as the convinced supporters of His Faith! How encouraging to observe the undeviating loyalty with which His valiant followers are guarding the purity and integrity of His clear and unequivocal teachings! How edifying the spectacle of those who are battling with the forces of a firmly intrenched orthodoxy in their struggle to emancipate themselves from the fetters of an outworn creed! How inspiring the conduct of those Muslim followers of Bahá'u'lláh who view, not with regret or apathy, but with feelings of unconcealed satisfaction, the deserved chastisement which the Almighty has inflicted upon those twin institutions of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, those engines of despotism and sworn enemies of the Cause of God!

Fundamental Principle of Religious Truth

Let no one, however, mistake my purpose. The Revelation, of which Bahá'u'lláh is the source and center, abrogates none of the religions that have preceded it, nor does it attempt, in the slightest degree, to distort their features or to belittle their value. It

disclaims any intention of dwarfing any of the Prophets of the past, or of whittling down the eternal verity of their teachings. It can, in no wise, conflict with the spirit that animates their claims, nor does it seek to undermine the basis of any man's allegiance to their cause. Its declared, its primary purpose is to enable every adherent of these Faiths to obtain a fuller understanding of the religion with which he stands identified, and to acquire a clearer apprehension of its purpose. It is neither eclectic in the presentation of its truths, nor arrogant in the affirmation of its claims. Its teachings revolve around the fundamental principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is progressive, not final. Unequivocally and without the least reservation it proclaims all established religions to be divine in origin, identical in their aims, complementary in their functions, continuous in their purpose, indispensable in their value to mankind.

"All the Prophets of God," asserts Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, "abide in the same tabernacle, soar in the same heaven, are seated upon the same throne, utter the same speech, and proclaim the same Faith." From the "beginning that hath no beginning," these Exponents of the Unity of God and Channels of His incessant utterance have shed the light of the invisible Beauty upon mankind, and will continue, to the "end that hath no end," to vouchsafe fresh revelations of His might and additional experiences of His inconceivable glory. To contend that any particular religion is final, that "all Revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the Tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest" would indeed be nothing less than sheer blasphemy.

"They differ," explains Bahá'u'lláh in that same epistle, "only in the intensity of their revelation and the comparative potency of their light." And this, not by reason of any inherent incapacity of any one of them to reveal in a fuller measure the glory of the Message with which He has been entrusted, but rather because of the immaturity and unpreparedness of the age He lived in to apprehend and absorb the full potentialities latent in that Faith.

"Know of a certainty," explains Bahá'u'lláh, "that in every Dispensation the light of

Divine Revelation has been vouchsafed to men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appears above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approaches its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declines until it reaches its setting point. Were it, all of a sudden, to manifest the energies latent within it, it would, no doubt, cause injury to all created things.... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty has bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist."

It is for this reason, and this reason only, that those who have recognized the Light of God in this age, claim no finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified, nor arrogate to the Faith they have embraced powers and attributes intrinsically superior to, or essentially different from, those which have characterized any of the religious systems that preceded it.

Does not Bahá'u'lláh Himself allude to the progressiveness of Divine Revelation and to the limitations which an inscrutable Wisdom has chosen to impose upon Him? What else can this passage of the Hidden Words imply, if not that He Who revealed it disclaimed finality for the Revelation entrusted to Him by the Almighty? "O Son of Justice! In the night-season the beauty of the immortal Being hath repaired from the emerald height of fidelity unto the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, and wept with such a weeping that the concourse on high and the dwellers of the realms above wailed at His lamenting. Whereupon there was asked, Why the wailing and weeping? He made reply: As bidden I waited expectant upon the hill of faithfulness, yet inhaled not from them that dwell on earth the fragrance of fidelity. Then summoned to return I beheld, and lo! certain doves of holiness were sore tried within the claws of the dogs of earth. Thereupon the Maid of Heaven hastened forth, unveiled, and resplendent, from Her mystic mansion, and asked of their names, and all were told but one. And when urged, the first Letter thereof was uttered, whereupon the dwellers of the celestial chambers rushed forth out of their habitation of glory. And whilst the second letter

was pronounced they fell down, one and all, upon the dust. At that moment a Voice was heard from the inmost shrine: 'Thus far and no farther.' Verily we bear witness to that which they have done and now are doing."

"The Revelation of which I am the bearer," Bahá'u'lláh explicitly declares, "is adapted to humanity's spiritual receptiveness and capacity; otherwise, the Light that shines within me can neither wax nor wane. Whatever I manifest is nothing more or less than the measure of the Divine glory which God has bidden me reveal."

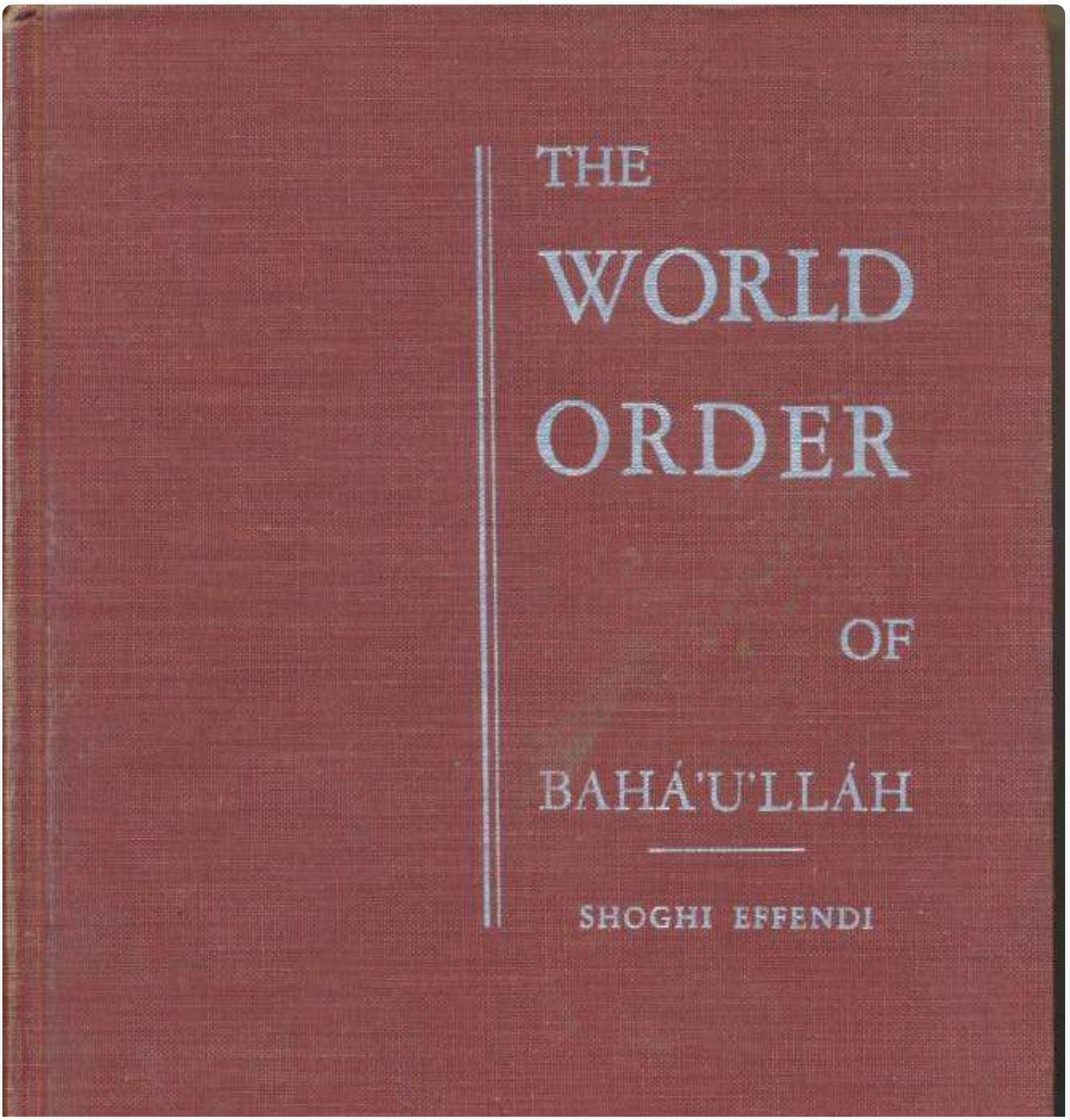
If the Light that is now streaming forth upon an increasingly responsive humanity with a radiance that bids fair to eclipse the splendor of such triumphs as the forces of religion have achieved in days past; if the signs and tokens which proclaimed its advent have been, in many respects, unique in the annals of past Revelations; if its votaries have evinced traits and qualities unexampled in the spiritual history of mankind; these should be attributed not to a superior merit which the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, as a Revelation isolated and alien from any previous Dispensation, might possess, but rather should be viewed and explained as the inevitable outcome of the forces that have made of this present age an age infinitely more advanced, more receptive, and more insistent to receive an ampler measure of Divine Guidance than has hitherto been vouchsafed to mankind.

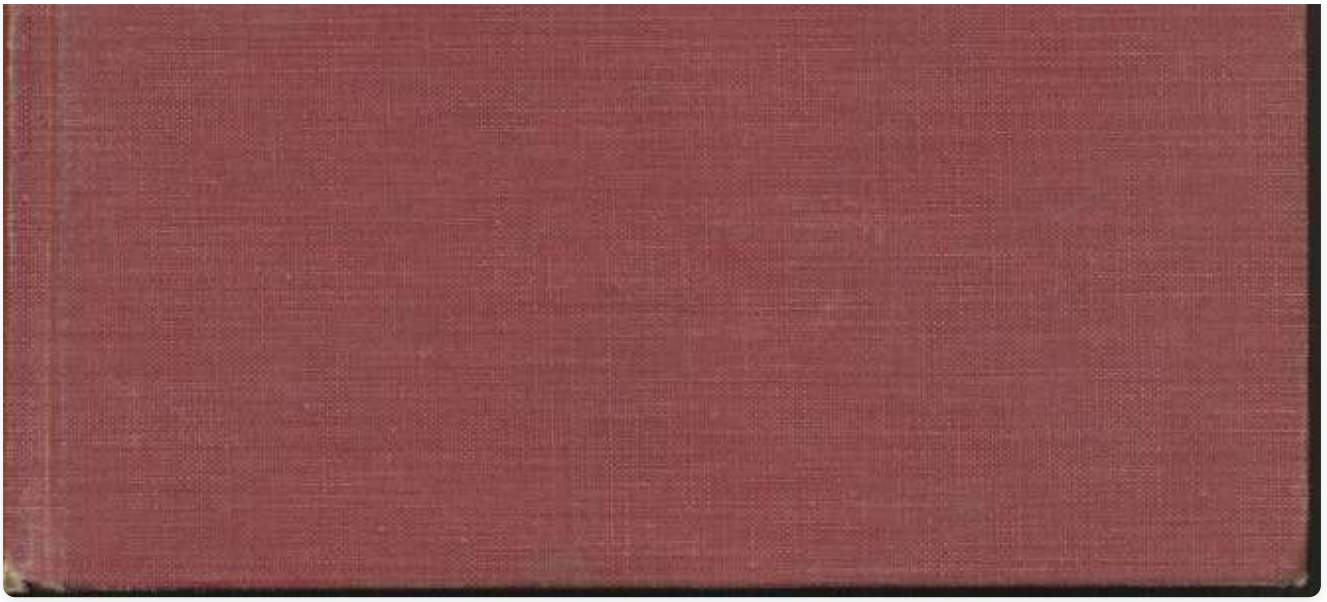
Necessity for a Fresh Revelation

Dearly beloved friends: Who, contemplating the helplessness, the fears and miseries of humanity in this day, can any longer question the necessity for a fresh revelation of the quickening power of God's redemptive love and guidance? Who, witnessing on one hand the stupendous advance achieved in the realm of human knowledge, of power, of skill and inventiveness, and viewing on the other the unprecedented character of the sufferings that afflict, and the dangers that beset, present-day society, can be so blind as to doubt that the hour has at last struck for the advent of a new Revelation, for a re-statement of the Divine Purpose, and for the consequent revival of those spiritual forces that have, at fixed intervals, rehabilitated the fortunes of human society? Does not the very operation of the world-unifying forces that are at work in this age necessitate that He Who is the Bearer of the Message of God in this day should not only reaffirm that self-same exalted standard of individual conduct

inculcated by the Prophets gone before Him, but embody in His appeal, to all governments and peoples, the essentials of that social code, that Divine Economy, which must guide humanity's concerted efforts in establishing that all-embracing federation which is to signalize the advent of the Kingdom of God on this earth?

May we not, therefore, recognizing as we do the necessity for such a revelation of God's redeeming power, meditate upon the supreme grandeur of the System unfolded by the hand of Bahá'u'lláh in this day? May we not pause, pressed though we be by the daily preoccupations which the ever-widening range of the administrative activities of His Faith must involve, to reflect upon the sanctity of the responsibilities it is our privilege to shoulder?





Comments

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The Station of the Báb

Not only in the character of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, however stupendous be His claim, does the greatness of this Dispensation reside. For among the distinguishing features of His Faith ranks, as a further evidence of its uniqueness, the fundamental truth that in the person of its Forerunner, the Báb, every follower of Bahá'u'lláh recognizes not merely an inspired annunciator but a direct Manifestation of God. It is their firm belief that, no matter how short the duration of His Dispensation, and however brief the period of the operation of His laws, the Báb had been endowed with a potency such as no founder of any of the past religions was, in the providence of the Almighty, allowed to possess. That He was not merely the precursor of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, that He was more than a divinely-inspired personage, that His was the station of an independent, self-sufficient Manifestation of God, is abundantly demonstrated by Himself, is affirmed in unmistakable terms by Bahá'u'lláh, and is finally attested by the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Nowhere but in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh's masterly exposition of the one

unifying truth underlying all the Revelations of the past, can we obtain a clearer apprehension of the potency of those forces inherent in that Preliminary Manifestation with which His own Faith stands indissolubly associated. Expatiating upon the unfathomed import of the signs and tokens that have accompanied the Revelation proclaimed by the Báb, the promised Qá'im, He recalls these prophetic words: "Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest." "Behold," adds Bahá'u'lláh, "how great and lofty is His station!" "Of His Revelation," He further adds, "the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or in pursuance of God's inscrutable Decree, they have not disclosed."

And yet, immeasurably exalted as is the station of the Báb, and marvellous as have been the happenings that have signalized the advent of His Cause, so wondrous a Revelation cannot but pale before the effulgence of that Orb of unsurpassed splendor Whose rise He foretold and whose superiority He readily acknowledged. We have but to turn to the writings of the Báb Himself in order to estimate the significance of that Quintessence of Light of which He, with all the majesty of His power, was but its humble and chosen Precursor.

Again and again the Báb admits, in glowing and unequivocal language, the preëminent character of a Faith destined to be made manifest after Him and to supersede His Cause. "The germ," He asserts in the Persian Bayán, the chief and best-preserved repository of His laws, "that holds within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of all those who follow me." "Of all the tributes," the Báb repeatedly proclaims in His writings, "I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in my Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause." Addressing Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Darábí, surnamed Vahíd, the most learned and influential among his followers, He says: "By the righteousness

of Him Whose power causeth the seed to germinate and Who breatheth the spirit of life into all things, were I to be assured that in the day of His Manifestation thou wilt deny Him, I would unhesitatingly disown thee and repudiate thy faith.... If, on the other hand, I be told that a Christian, who beareth no allegiance to My Faith, will believe in Him, the same will I regard as the apple of Mine eye."

The Outpouring of Divine Grace

"If all the peoples of the world," Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, "be invested with the powers and attributes destined for the Letters of the Living, the chosen disciples of the Báb, whose station is ten thousand times more glorious than any which the apostles of old have attained, and if they, one and all, should, swift as the twinkling of an eye, hesitate to recognize the Light of my Revelation, their faith shall be of no avail, and they shall be accounted among the infidels." "So tremendous," He writes, "is the outpouring of Divine grace in this Dispensation that if mortal hands could be swift enough to record them, within the space of a single day and night, there would stream verses of such number as to be equivalent to the whole of the Persian Bayán."

Such, dearly-beloved friends, is the effusion of celestial grace vouchsafed by the Almighty to this age, this most illumined century! We stand too close to so colossal a Revelation to expect in this, the first century of its era, to arrive at a just estimate of its towering grandeur, its infinite possibilities, its transcendent beauty. Small though our present numbers may be, however limited our capacities, or circumscribed our influence, we, into whose hands so pure, so tender, so precious a heritage has been entrusted, should at all times strive, with unrelaxing vigilance, to abstain from any thoughts, words, or deeds, that might tend to dim its brilliance, or injure its growth. How tremendous our responsibility; how delicate and laborious our task!

Dear friends: Clear and emphatic as are the instructions which our departed Master has reiterated in countless Tablets bequeathed by Him to His followers

throughout the world, a few, owing to the restricted influence of the Cause in the West, have been purposely withheld from the body of His occidental disciples, who, despite their numerical inferiority, are now exercising such a preponderating influence in the direction and administration of its affairs. I feel it, therefore, incumbent upon me to stress, now that the time is ripe, the importance of an instruction which, at the present stage of the evolution of our Faith, should be increasingly emphasized, irrespective of its application to the East or to the West. And this principle is no other than that which involves the non-participation by the adherents of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, whether in their individual capacities or collectively as local or national Assemblies, in any form of activity that might be interpreted, either directly or indirectly, as an interference in the political affairs of any particular government. Whether it be in the publications which they initiate and supervise; or in their official and public deliberations; or in the posts they occupy and the services they render; or in the communications they address to their fellow-disciples; or in their dealings with men of eminence and authority; or in their affiliations with kindred societies and organizations, it is, I am firmly convinced, their first and sacred obligation to abstain from any word or deed that might be construed as a violation of this vital principle. Theirs is the duty to demonstrate, on one hand, the nonpolitical character of their Faith, and to assert, on the other, their unqualified loyalty and obedience to whatever is the considered judgment of their respective governments.

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The Divine Polity

Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions. In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that world-wide Fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster. Let them beware lest

they allow themselves to become the tools of unscrupulous politicians, or to be entrapped by the treacherous devices of the plotters and the perfidious among their countrymen. Let them so shape their lives and regulate their conduct that no charge of secrecy, of fraud, of bribery or of intimidation may, however ill-founded, be brought against them. Let them rise above all particularism and partisanship, above the vain disputes, the petty calculations, the transient passions that agitate the face, and engage the attention, of a changing world. It is their duty to strive to distinguish, as clearly as they possibly can, and if needed with the aid of their elected representatives, such posts and functions as are either diplomatic or political from those that are purely administrative in character, and which under no circumstances are affected by the changes and chances that political activities and party government, in every land, must necessarily involve. Let them affirm their unyielding determination to stand, firmly and unreservedly, for the way of Bahá'u'lláh, to avoid the entanglements and bickerings inseparable from the pursuits of the politician, and to become worthy agencies of that Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men.

It should be made unmistakably clear that such an attitude implies neither the slightest indifference to the cause and interests of their own country, nor involves any insubordination on their part to the authority of recognized and established governments. Nor does it constitute a repudiation of their sacred obligation to promote, in the most effective manner, the best interests of their government and people. It indicates the desire cherished by every true and loyal follower of Bahá'u'lláh to serve, in an unselfish, unostentatious and patriotic fashion, the highest interests of the country to which he belongs, and in a way that would entail no departure from the high standards of integrity and truthfulness associated with the teachings of his Faith.

As the number of the Bahá'í communities in various parts of the world multiplies and their power, as a social force, becomes increasingly apparent, they will no doubt find themselves increasingly subjected to the pressure which men of

authority and influence, in the political domain, will exercise in the hope of obtaining the support they require for the advancement of their aims. These communities will, moreover, feel a growing need of the good-will and the assistance of their respective governments in their efforts to widen the scope, and to consolidate the foundations, of the institutions committed to their charge. Let them beware lest, in their eagerness to further the aims of their beloved Cause, they should be led unwittingly to bargain with their Faith, to compromise with their essential principles, or to sacrifice, in return for any material advantage which their institutions may derive, the integrity of their spiritual ideals. Let them proclaim that in whatever country they reside, and however advanced their institutions, or profound their desire to enforce the laws, and apply the principles, enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, they will, unhesitatingly, subordinate the operation of such laws and the application of such principles to the requirements and legal enactments of their respective governments. Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries.

It should also be borne in mind that the very extension of the activities in which we are engaged, and the variety of the communities which labor under divers forms of government, so essentially different in their standards, policies, and methods, make it absolutely essential for all those who are the declared members of any one of these communities to avoid any action that might, by arousing the suspicion or exciting the antagonism of any one government, involve their brethren in fresh persecutions or complicate the nature of their task. How else, might I ask, could such a far-flung Faith, which transcends political and social boundaries, which includes within its pale so great a variety of races and nations, which will have to rely increasingly, as it forges ahead, on the good-will and support of the diversified and contending governments of the earth—how else could such a Faith succeed in preserving its unity, in safeguarding its interests, and in ensuring the steady and peaceful development of its institutions?

Such an attitude, however, is not dictated by considerations of selfish expediency, but is actuated, first and foremost, by the broad principle that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh will, under no circumstances, suffer themselves to be involved, whether as individuals or in their collective capacities, in matters that would entail the slightest departure from the fundamental verities and ideals of their Faith. Neither the charges which the uninformed and the malicious may be led to bring against them, nor the allurements of honors and rewards, will ever induce them to surrender their trust or to deviate from their path. Let their words proclaim, and their conduct testify, that they who follow Bahá'u'lláh, in whatever land they reside, are actuated by no selfish ambition, that they neither thirst for power, nor mind any wave of unpopularity, of distrust or criticism, which a strict adherence to their standards might provoke.

Difficult and delicate though be our task, the sustaining power of Bahá'u'lláh and of His Divine guidance will assuredly assist us if we follow steadfastly in His way, and strive to uphold the integrity of His laws. The light of His redeeming grace, which no earthly power can obscure, will if we persevere, illuminate our path, as we steer our course amid the snares and pitfalls of a troubled age, and will enable us to discharge our duties in a manner that would redound to the glory and the honor of His blessed Name.

Our Beloved Temple

And finally, dearly-beloved brethren, let me once more direct your attention to the pressing claims of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, our beloved Temple. Need I remind you of the imperative necessity of carrying out to a successful conclusion, while there is yet time, the great enterprise to which, before the eyes of a watching world, we stand committed? Need I stress the great damage which further delay in the prosecution of this divinely-appointed task must, even in these critical and unforeseen circumstances, inflict upon the prestige of our beloved Cause? I am, I can assure you, acutely conscious of the stringency of the circumstances with

which you are faced, the embarrassments under which you labor, the cares with which you are burdened, the pressing urgency of the demands that are being incessantly made upon your depleted resources. I am, however, still more profoundly aware of the unprecedented character of the opportunity which it is your privilege to seize and utilize. I am aware of the incalculable blessings that must await the termination of a collective enterprise which, by the range and quality of the sacrifices it entailed, deserves to be ranked among the most outstanding examples of Bahá'í solidarity ever since those deeds of brilliant heroism immortalized the memory of the heroes of Nayríz, of Zanján, and of Tabarsí. I appeal to you, therefore, friends and fellow-disciples of Bahá'u'lláh, for a more abundant measure of self-sacrifice, for a higher standard of concerted effort, for a still more compelling evidence of the reality of the faith that glows within you.

And in this fervent plea, my voice is once more reinforced by the passionate, and perhaps, the last, entreaty, of the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose spirit, now hovering on the edge of the Great Beyond, longs to carry on its flight to the Abhá Kingdom, and into the presence of a Divine, an almighty Father, an assurance of the joyous consummation of an enterprise, the progress of which has so greatly brightened the closing days of her earthly life. That the American believers, those stout-hearted pioneers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, will unanimously respond, with that same spontaneous generosity, that same measure of self-sacrifice, as have characterized their response to her appeals in the past, no one who is familiar with the vitality of their faith can possibly question.

Would to God that by the end of the spring of the year 1933 the multitudes who, from the remote corners of the globe, will throng the grounds of the Great Fair to be held in the neighborhood of that hallowed shrine may, as a result of your sustained spirit of self-sacrifice, be privileged to gaze on the arrayed splendor of its dome—a dome that shall stand as a flaming beacon and a symbol of hope amidst the gloom of a despairing world.

Your true brother,

SHOGHI

Haifa, Palestine,

March 21, 1932

March 22. On this date in 1987, the UHJ wrote "homosexuality...an aberration subject to treatment...doubtless in the future clear principles of prevention and treatment will emerge...persons so afflicted...the underlying predisposition, which you consider to be innate but the Teachings do not."

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 22. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote to a young physician "homosexuality...an aberration subject to treatment, however intractable exclusive homosexuality may now seem to be...doubtless in the future clear principles of prevention and treatment will emerge...persons so afflicted...the underlying predisposition, which you consider to be innate but the Teachings do not."

> ...the Faith does not recognize **homosexuality** as a "natural" or permanent phenomenon. Rather, it sees this as **an aberration subject to treatment, however intractable exclusive homosexuality may now seem to be.** To the question of alteration of homosexual bents, much study must be given, and **doubtless in the future clear principles of prevention and treatment will emerge.** As for those now afflicted, a homosexual does not decide to be a problem human, but he does, as you rightly state, have decision in choosing his way of life, i.e. abstaining from homosexual acts.
>
> Your plea for understanding of and justice extended to homosexuals is well taken in many respects, and the House of Justice assures you of its concern for the large number of **persons so afflicted** . Your work with the homosexual community is praiseworthy, and it permits you personally to exercise the support which is necessary for these often harassed persons, support which you call for in your essay. Moreover, your interest cannot but be therapeutic, at least for the more superficial elements of the

problem; however, definitive therapy of **the underlying predisposition, which you consider to be innate but the Teachings do not,** may have to await additional investigations. As for the responsibility of Assemblies and of individual Bahá'ís, certainly all are called upon to be understanding, supportive and helpful to any individual who carries the burden of homosexuality.

As a young physician, you may wish to use this quotation, taken from a letter written by the Guardian to an individual believer in March 1950, as your guidance: **"To be afflicted this way is a great burden to a conscientious soul. But through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap."** (22 March 1987)

Comments

No comments.

March 22. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As to the question of retirement from work for individuals who have reached a certain age, this is a matter on which the International House of Justice will have to legislate as there are no provisions in the Aqdas concerning it."

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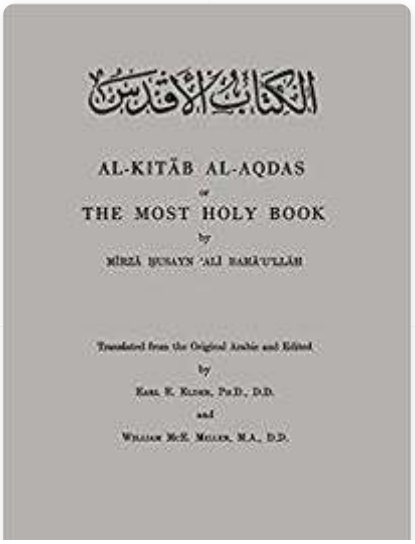
2114. Retirement from Work

"As to the question of retirement from work for individuals who have reached a certain age, this is a matter on which the International House of Justice will have to legislate as there are no provisions in the Aqdas concerning it."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, March 22, 1937: Principles of Bahá'í Administration, p. 12)



Comments

No comments.

March 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The only thing we should stipulate is that we do not wish to be cremated, as it is against our Bahá'í laws...The spirit has no more connection with the body after it departs, but as the body was once the temple of the spirit, we Bahá'ís are..."

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667. Body Can Be Left to Medical Science, Remains Not to be Cremated

"There is nothing in the teachings against leaving our bodies to medical science. The only thing we should stipulate is that we do not wish to be cremated, as it is against our Bahá'í laws.

"As many people make arrangements to leave their bodies to medical science for investigation, he suggests that you inquire, either through some lawyer friend or through some hospital, how you could do this, and then make the necessary provision in your Will, stipulating that you wish your body to be of service to mankind in death, and that, being a Bahá'í, you request that your remains not be cremated and not be taken more than an hour's journey from the place of your death.

"The spirit has no more connection with the body after it departs, but as the body was once the temple of the spirit, we Bahá'ís are taught that it must be treated with respect."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 22, 1957)

Comments

No comments.

March 22. On this date in 1856, William Hoar was born in Nova Scotia. A Disciple of 'Abdu’l-Bahá and one of the first Americans to become a member of the Bahá’í Faith, he died of myocarditis six weeks after hearing the news of 'Abdu’l-Bahá's death.

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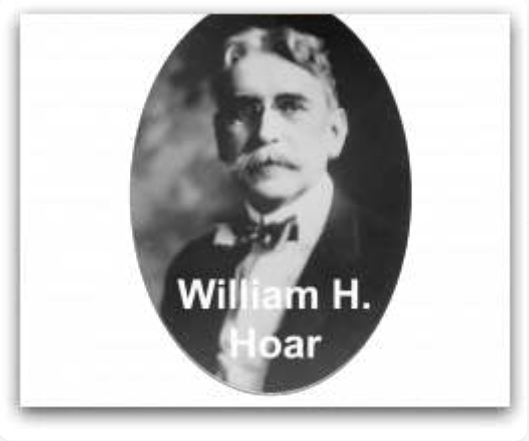


Comments

No comments.

March 22. On this date in 2013, Elizabeth "Libby" Bevan Golmohammadi, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Rhodes, and a member of the first NSA of Sweden, died in China.

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 22. On this date in 2013, Elizabeth "Libby" Bevan Golmohammadi , a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Rhodes , and a member of the first NSA of Sweden, died in China.

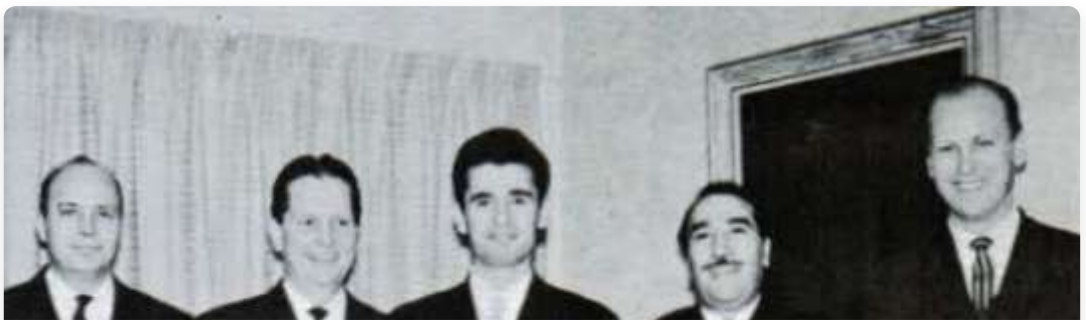
Elizabeth Bevan learned about the Bahá'í Faith when she was young from Dorothy Baker, who would later be named a Hand of the Cause of God.

When she was 28 years old, she responded to the call by Shoghi Effendi's for pioneers to arise and open territories where there were no Bahá'ís. In 1954,Shoghi Effendi named her as Knight of Bahá'u'lláh when she moved from her home in Los Angeles, California, to the Island of Rhodes where she remained until 1958.

Later she moved to Sweden, where she served the Faith with her husband, Rouhollah Golmohammadi, and raised her family. In 1962 Libby and Rouhollah Golmohammadi were both elected to Sweden's inaugural National Spiritual Assembly, and the next year both served as electors at the first International Bahá'í Convention for the election of the first Universal House of Justice at Ridván in 1963.

In retirement Libby and her husband moved once again to Hungary, joining their daughter, Haleh, and served the Cause for four years in that country. In 1998 she and her husband returned to Sweden, where her died in 1999.

In 2004 at age 79 Libby moved to Tianjin, again to be near her daughter. She suffered a stroke in July 2011, nearly two years before her death on March 22, 2013.



Comments

No comments.

March 22. On this date in 1966, the Universal House of Justice cabled the NSA of the U.S. "Joyously hail fiftieth anniversary (of the) revelations (of the) first of the Tablets (of the) Divine Plan."

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 22. On this date in 1966, the Universal House of Justice cabled the NSA of the U.S. "Joyously hail fiftieth anniversary (of the) revelations (of the) first of the Tablets (of the) Divine Plan."

> Fiftieth Anniversary of the Revelation of the Tablets of the Divine Plan
>
> 22 MARCH 1966
>
> To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
>
> JOYOUSLY HAIL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY REVELATION FIRST OF TABLETS DIVINE
>
> PLAN CHARTER PROPAGATION FAITH THROUGHOUT WORLD.' PRAYING
>
> SHRINES OBSERVANCE OCCASION MAY BE SOURCE RENEWED ENTHUSIASM DEDICATION FRIENDS ACCOMPLISH GOALS WIN FRESH LAURELS SHARE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES CANADA ALASKA HAWAII.
>
> THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
>
> *The Tablets of the Divine Plan are fourteen Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed in 1916 and 1917 to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada. In them He conveys His mandate for the transmission of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world.*

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, a collection of 14 letters

written between March 1916 and March 1917 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada. . These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order . Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

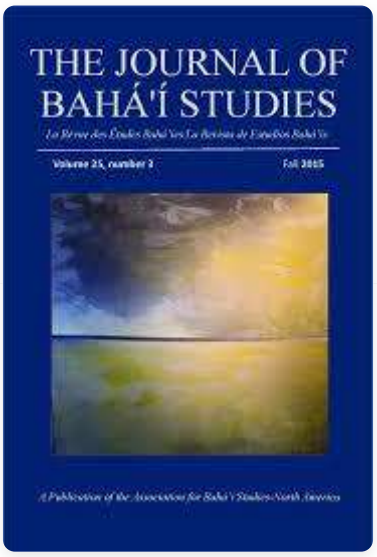
Comments

No comments.

March 22. On this date in 1981, the ITC issued a letter stating "The Supreme Body has informed us that it believes that both the International Teaching Centre and the Boards of Counsellors can render valuable services in the field of Bahá'í scholarship by encouraging budding scholars..."

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 22. On this date in 1981, the International Teaching Centre issued a letter (also here) stating "The Supreme Body has informed us that it believes that both the International Teaching Centre and the Boards of Counsellors can render valuable services in the field of Bahá'í scholarship by encouraging budding scholars, and also by promoting within the Bahá'í community an atmosphere of tolerance for the views of others ."



Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 1997, an email to the Universal House of Justice raised concerns about the translation of an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Corinne True, who had raised concerns about the exclusion of women from the Chicago House of Justice.

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 23. On this date in 1997, an email to the Universal House of Justice raised concerns about the translation of an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Corinne True, who had raised concerns about the exclusion of women from the Chicago House of Justice.

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 30 March 1997

From: Research Department

Translation of "'Umumi" in Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

In an email message to the Universal House of Justice dated 23 March 1997, a question has been raised concerning translation. In an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Mrs. True (first translated into English by Dr. Ameen Farid in July 1909) the following statement has been revealed.

According to the ordinances of the Faith of God, women are the equals of men in all rights save only that of membership on the Universal House of Justice, for as hath been stated in the text of the Book, both the head and the members of the House of Justice are men. However, in all other bodies, such as the Temple Construction Committee, the Teaching Committee, the

Spiritual Assembly, and in charitable and scientific associations, women share equally in all rights with men. (Revised translation from the Persian, authorized 1987)

In the above Tablet, for the title "The Universal House of Justice" the Persian words used are: "Baytu'l-'Adl-i-'Umumi". The question has been asked, whether the translation of the word "'Umumi", as "Universal", could be a mistake, since the word has the connotation of "public" or "general" in addition to its meaning as "universal". Thus, following such an argument, the reference in the above text could perhaps be not to the "Universal House of Justice" but to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago.

The word "'umumi" as an adjective qualifying the title of the institution of the "House of Justice" appears three times in the Persian text of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.1 Shoghi Effendi's translation of this adjective is invariably "Universal" with a capital "U". The passages from the Will and Testament are as follows:2

> The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abha Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God (page 11).

And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God and daysprings of knowledge and understanding, must be steadfast in God's faith and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one. Unto this body all things must be referred (page 14).

> Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant. By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be found, after the manner of the customary elections in Western countries such as those of England (pages 19-20).
>
> There is no doubt whatsoever that by the term "Baytu'l-'Adl-i-'Umumi", in the above-mentioned Tablet, the institution intended, whose membership is to be of men only, is none other than "The Universal House of Justice" and not the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago.
>
> **Note**
>
> 1. See "Alvah-i-Vasayay-i-Mubarakiy-i-Hadrat-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Cairo: Mirza Abu'l-Qasim Gulistanih-Shirazi, 1924-25), pages 12, 15, and 21. 2. See "Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá" Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), pages 11, 14, and 19-20. Translation of "'Umumi" in Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 30 March 1997

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12. On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice .

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago

House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality . The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching .

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandaráni of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice , noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the " House of Justice " had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

> Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be

> dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá’u’lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá’ís will eventually evolve."
>
> (30 November 1930)

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

> 270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.
>
> "...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male .

Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U. Fareed) was the son of Mirza Assad Ullah Fareed (who authored *The School of the Prophets*) and the nephew of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wife, Munírih Khánum. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter and had been active in promoting the Bahá'í Faith. He had also received a number of Tablets from 'Abdu'l-

Bahá.

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah ."

Fast-Dwindling Band of Covenant-Breakers

Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah , within the cradle of the Faith, North America and Turkey, who demonstrated varying degrees, in the course of over thirty years, of faithlessness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being **the most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate** in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.

The second, history will recognize as one of the **most perfidious among the kinsmen** of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who, **driven by ungovernable cupidity** , committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.

The third will be chiefly remembered by the **pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition** impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.

All three, however **blinded by perversity** , could not have failed to perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently

celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.

Corinne True, age 91 (right), with two of her daughters at the dedication of the completed House of Worship, Wilmette, IL, May 1, 1953.
(National Bahá'í Archives, United States)

Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 1939, Sadhij Nassar, Bahá'u'lláh's granddaughter through his son Badí'ullah, became the first woman arrested under the British Defense Emergency Regulations. She was held without charge. Shoghi Effendi accused her of "ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism."

Published on: March 20, 2026

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> THE SPIRITUAL POTENCIES OF THAT CONSECRATED SPOT
>
> The transfer of the sacred remains of the brother and mother of our Lord and Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mount Carmel and their final interment within the hallowed precincts of the Shrine of the Báb, and in the immediate neighborhood of the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf , constitute, apart from their historic associations and the tender sentiments they arouse, events of such capital institutional significance as only future happenings, steadily and mysteriously unfolding at the world center of our Faith, can adequately demonstrate.
>
> The circumstances attending the consummation of this long, this profoundly cherished hope were no less significant. The swiftness and suddenness with which so delicate and weighty an undertaking was conducted; the surmounting of various obstacles which the outbreak of war and its inevitable repercussions necessarily engendered; the success of the long-drawn out negotiations which the solution of certain preliminary problems imposed; the execution of the plan in the face of the continued instability and persistent dangers following the fierce riots that so long and

so violently rocked the Holy Land, and despite the smoldering fire of animosity kindled in the breasts of ecclesiastics and Covenant-breakers alike--all combined to demonstrate, afresh and with compelling power, the invincible might of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Purest Branch , the martyred son, the companion, and amanuensis of Bahá'u'lláh, that pious and holy youth, who in the darkest days of Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in the barracks of 'Akká entreated, on his death-bed, his Father to accept him as a ransom for those of His loved ones who yearned for, but were unable to attain, His presence, and the saintly mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá , surnamed Navvab by Bahá'u'lláh, and the first recipient of the honored and familiar title of "the Most Exalted Leaf," separated in death above half a century, and forced to suffer the humiliation of an alien burial-ground, are now at long last reunited with the Greatest Holy Leaf with whom they had so abundantly shared the tribulations of one of the most distressing episodes of the Heroic Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Avenged, eternally safeguarded, befittingly glorified, they repose embosomed in the heart of Carmel, hidden beneath its sacred soil, interred in one single spot, lying beneath the shadow of the twin holy Tombs, and facing across the bay, on an eminence of unequalled loveliness and beauty, the silver-city of 'Akká, the Point of Adoration of the entire Bahá'í world, and the Door of Hope for all mankind. "Haste thee, O Carmel!" thus proclaims the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, "for lo, the light of the countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee." "Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the day-spring of the evidences of His Revelation."

The machinations of Badí'ullah --the brother and lieutenant of the Focal Center of sedition and Arch-Breaker of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, the deceased Muhammad-'Ali --who with uncommon temerity and exceptional vigor addressed his written protest to the civil authorities, claiming the right to oppose the projected transfer of the remains of the mother and brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have been utterly frustrated. So foolish a claim,

advanced by one who in the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá has been denounced as an "alert and active worker of mischief," and whose life has been marked by so many instances of extravagance, of betrayal and folly, has been summarily rejected by the fairness and justice of the civil authorities, in whose custody the notorious Sadhij **[1]** , the daughter of that same Badí'ullah , is still retained, as a direct result of her ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism, and whose acts constitute a clear and double violation of the civil law of the land and of the spiritual ordinances of Bahá'u'lláh, in Whose Faith she professes to believe.

Unabashed by his appalling mistakes and blunders; undeterred by the galling failure of his persistent efforts, in conjunction with his brother, to establish, in the days following the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, their alleged right to the custody of the Most Holy Tomb ; unrestrained by the memory of the abortive attempt of Muhammad-'Ali to retain the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh as a private residence for himself and his family; unchastened by the spiritual and material misery into which he and his kindred have sunk; and impotent to perceive the contrast between that misery and the consolidating strength and ever-enhancing prestige of the institutions heralding the birth of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh at its international center, he has, with characteristic insolence, dared to raise once again his voice against the resistless march of events that are steadily accelerating the expansion and establishment of the Faith in the Holy Land.

For it must be clearly understood, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the conjunction of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf with those of her brother and mother incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Báb's overshadowing Sepulchre , and in the vicinity of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár , which will be reared on its flank, is destined to evolve into the focal center of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh and anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and which are to function in consonance with the principles that govern the twin institutions of the Guardianship &oldid=745828715)

and the Universal House of Justice . Then, and then only, will this momentous prophecy which illuminates the concluding passages of the Tablet of Carmel be fulfilled: "Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee (Carmel), and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names."

To attempt to visualize, even in its barest outline, the glory that must envelop these institutions, to essay even a tentative and partial description of their character or the manner of their operation, or to trace however inadequately the course of events leading to their rise and eventual establishment is far beyond my own capacity and power. Suffice it to say that at this troubled stage in world history the association of these three incomparably precious souls who, next to the three Central Figures of our Faith, tower in rank above the vast multitude of the heroes, Letters, martyrs, hands, teachers and administrators of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in such a potentially powerful spiritual and administrative Center, is in itself an event which will release forces that are bound to hasten the emergence in a land which, geographically, spiritually and administratively, constitutes the heart of the entire planet, of some of the brightest gems of that World Order now shaping in the womb of this travailing age.

For such as might undertake, in the days to come, the meritorious and highly enviable pilgrimage to these blessed shrines, as well as for the benefit of the less privileged who, aware of the greatness of their virtue and the pre-eminence of their lineage, desire to commune with their spirits, and to strive to acquire an added insight into the glory of their position, and to follow in their footsteps, let these testimonies written by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá be their inspiration and guidance in their noble quest:

"At this very moment," Bahá'u'lláh testifies, "My son is being washed before My face, after Our having sacrificed him in the Most Great Prison. Thereat have the dwellers of the Abhá Tabernacle wept with a great weeping, and such as have suffered imprisonment with this Youth in the path of God, the Lord of the promised Day, lamented. Under such conditions My Pen hath

not been prevented from remembering its Lord, the Lord of all nations. It summoneth the people unto God, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. This is the day whereon he that was created by the light of Bahá has suffered martyrdom, at a time when he lay imprisoned at the hands of his enemies."

"Upon thee, O Branch of God!" He solemnly and most touchingly, in that same Tablet, bestows upon him His benediction, "be the remembrance of God and His praise, and the praise of all that dwell in the Realm of Immortality, and of all the denizens of the Kingdom of Names. Happy art thou in that thou hast been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, until Thou didst sacrifice thyself before the face of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Thou, in truth, hast been wronged, and to this testifieth the Beauty of Him, the Self-Subsisting. Thou didst, in the first days of thy life, bear that which hath caused all things to groan, and made every pillar to tremble. Happy is the one that remembereth thee, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Creator of the Morn."

"Glorified art Thou, O Lord, my God!" He, in a prayer, astoundingly proclaims, "Thou seest me in the hands of Mine enemies, and My son bloodstained before Thy face, O Thou in Whose hands is the kingdom of all names. I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened and all that dwell on earth be united."

"Blessed art thou," He, in another Tablet affirms, "and blessed he that turneth unto thee, and visiteth thy grave, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Lord of all that was and shall be.... I testify that thou didst return in meekness unto thine abode. Great is thy blessedness and the blessedness of them that hold fast unto the hem of thy outspread robe.... Thou art, verily, the trust of God and His treasure in this land. Erelong will God reveal through thee that which He hath desired. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. When thou wast laid to rest in the earth, the earth itself trembled in its longing to meet thee. Thus hath it been decreed, and yet the people perceive not.... Were We to recount the mysteries of thine ascension, they that are asleep would waken, and all

beings would be set ablaze with the fire of the remembrance of My Name, the Mighty, the Loving."

Concerning the Most Exalted Leaf , the mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'u'lláh has written: "The first Spirit through which all spirits were revealed, and the first Light by which all lights shone forth, rest upon thee, O Most Exalted Leaf, thou who hast been mentioned in the Crimson Book! Thou art the one whom God created to arise and serve His own Self, and the Manifestation of His Cause, and the Day-Spring of His Revelation, and the Dawning-Place of His signs, and the Source of His commandments; and Who so aided thee that thou didst turn with thy whole being unto Him, at a time when His servants and handmaidens had turned away from His Face. ...Happy art thou, O My handmaiden, and My Leaf, and the one mentioned in My Book, and inscribed by My Pen of Glory in My Scrolls and Tablets. ...Rejoice thou, at this moment, in the most exalted Station and the All-highest Paradise, and the Abhá Horizon, inasmuch as He Who is the Lord of Names hath remembered thee. We bear witness that thou didst attain unto all good, and that God hath so exalted thee, that all honor and glory circled around thee."

"O Navvab !" He thus, in another Tablet, addresses her, "O Leaf that hath sprung from My Tree, and been My companion! My glory be upon thee, and My loving-kindness, and My mercy that hath surpassed all beings. We announce unto thee that which will gladden thine eye, and assure thy soul, and rejoice thine heart. Verily, thy Lord is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful. God hath been and will be pleased with thee, and hath singled thee out for His own Self, and chosen thee from among His handmaidens to serve Him, and hath made thee the companion of His Person in the day-time and in the night-season."

"Hear thou Me once again," He reassures her, "God is well-pleased with thee, as a token of His grace and a sign of His mercy. He hath made thee to be His companion in every one of His worlds, and hath nourished thee with His meeting and presence, so long as His Name, and His Remembrance,

and His Kingdom, and His Empire shall endure. Happy is the handmaid that hath mentioned thee, and sought thy good-pleasure, and humbled herself before thee, and held fast unto the cord of thy love. Woe betide him that denieth thy exalted station, and the things ordained for thee from God, the Lord of all names, and him that hath turned away from thee, and rejected thy station before God, the Lord of the mighty throne."

"O faithful ones!" Bahá'u'lláh specifically enjoins, "Should ye visit the resting-place of the Most Exalted Leaf, who hath ascended unto the Glorious Companion, stand ye and say: 'Salutation and blessing and glory upon thee, O Holy Leaf that hath sprung from the Divine Lote-Tree! I bear witness that thou hast believed in God and in His signs, and answered His Call, and turned unto Him, and held fast unto His cord, and clung to the hem of His grace, and fled thy home in His path, and chosen to live as a stranger, out of love for His presence and in thy longing to serve Him. May God have mercy upon him that draweth nigh unto thee, and remembereth thee through the things which My Pen hath voiced in this, the most great station. We pray God that He may forgive us, and forgive them that have turned unto thee, and grant their desires, and bestow upon them, through His wondrous grace, whatever be their wish. He, verily, is the Bountiful, the Generous. Praise be to God, He Who is the Desire of all worlds; and the Beloved of all who recognize Him."

And, finally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself in one of His remarkably significant Tablets, has borne witness not only to the exalted station of one whose "seed shall inherit the Gentiles," whose Husband is the Lord of Hosts, but also to the sufferings endured by her who was His beloved mother. "As to thy question concerning the 54th chapter of Isaiah," He writes, "This chapter refers to the Most Exalted Leaf, the mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As a proof of this it is said: `For more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife.' Reflect upon this statement, and then upon the following: 'And thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.' And truly the humiliation and reproach which she suffered in the path of God is a fact which no one can refute. For

the calamities and afflictions mentioned in the whole chapter are such afflictions which she suffered in the path of God, all of which she endured with patience and thanked God therefor and praised Him, because He had enabled her to endure afflictions for the sake of Bahá. During all this time, the men and women (Covenant-breakers) persecuted her in an incomparable manner, while she was patient, God-fearing, calm, humble and contented through the favor of her Lord and by the bounty of her Creator."

December 21, 1939

[1] From the entry titled "Sadhij Nassar" on "Palestinian Journeys" ...

Sadhij Nassar was born in Haifa. Her father, an Iranian by origin, was Shaykh Badi'ullah Baha'i from Acre. She and her husband, Najib Nassar, had a son, Faruq. She studied at the Sisters of Nazareth School in Haifa and graduated from it.

Her professional life began in 1923 when she started writing articles in the *al-Karmel* newspaper founded in Haifa in 1908 by her husband Najib Nassar. She later helped him edit and run that newspaper.

In 1926 she began a section in that newspaper called "The Women's Section," which dealt with social issues; both men and women wrote articles for that section. In 1932, she ran two sections in that newspaper, one devoted to women's issues and the other to social topics.

Sadhij Nassar's articles about women were distinguished by their libertarian spirit. She encouraged Palestinian mothers to raise their children on the basis of equality between boys and girls, called for educating the Palestinian woman and providing her with work opportunities, and attacked dominant social ills in society. She also encouraged Palestinian women to engage in political life and to contribute to resisting British and Zionist colonialism.

In addition to her journalistic work, Nassar played a role in mobilizing and organizing Palestinian women. In 1930, and in collaboration with Mariam al-Khalil, she co-founded the Society of the Arab Women's Union in Haifa, which played a prominent role in the General Strike of 1936. She also took part in the women's demonstrations

that accompanied that strike. Nassar was among the first to recognize the importance of organizing rural women and in getting them to join the national struggle. She worked hard to organize the women farmers of the Baysan district (among whom she lived for some time). Her efforts in this regard, however, proved unsuccessful.

Sadhij Nassar participated in several Arab women's conferences and was a member of the Palestinian women's delegation to the Eastern Women's Congress for Palestine held in Cairo in the middle of October 1938, at the invitation of Huda Sha'rawi, the pioneer Arab feminist. At that conference, Nassar was elected secretary of the conference bureau. The conference called for an end to the British Mandate and the formation of a constitutional and sovereign state in Palestine, linked by treaty to Britain (as were Egypt and Iraq). She also took part in the General Congress of Arab Women called for by the Union of Egyptian Women and held at the Cairo Opera House in 1944. She delivered a speech at that conference urging the Arabs to work actively to save Palestine before it was too late.

Sadhij Nassar was the first Palestinian woman to be arrested by the British Mandate authorities because of her nationalist activities. The British arrested her in late 1938 and charged her with supplying arms to the Palestinian rebels, describing her as a "very dangerous woman" and a "prominent agitator." She was held at the Bethlehem detention camp for eleven months. A wide local and international campaign was mounted to demand her release; her husband wrote her a letter in which he stated that if he did not make it into the pages of history because of his newspaper *al-Karmel,* he would surely make it because of her.

Nassar continued her editorial and administrative work in al-Karmel. The British Mandate authorities closed the newspaper several times, but in 1944 they invoked the emergency regulations then prevalent in Palestine and sealed its premises permanently.

Following the Palestine disaster of 1948, Sadhij Nassar sought refuge in Lebanon, where she published a series of articles in the newspaper *al-Yawm* about the tragedy of Palestine and the deterioration of conditions in it. After moving to Syria, she published her articles in Syrian newspapers such as *al-Qabas*.

Sadhij Nassar was a dedicated and firm nationalist and a prominent and unwavering

feminist activist. She was among the first Palestinian women who were active in the field of politics and nationalist organization as well as journalism. She was highly cultured and was proficient in four languages.

She died in Damascus and was buried there.

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Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 2001, a newspapers article in "The Jerusalem Post" covered the "first celebration in Jerusalem of Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i new year," attended by such notable figures as Chair in Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University Moshe Sharon, Baha'i International Community ...

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 23. On this date in 2001, a newspapers article in *The Jerusalem Post* covered the "first celebration in Jerusalem of Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i new year," attended by such notable figures as Chair in Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University Moshe Sharon; Baha'i International Community secretary-general Albert Lincoln and his wife, Joan, a member of the International Teaching Centre; Jerusalem Baha'i representative Kern Wisman and his wife, Barbara; and Murray Smith, BIC deputy secretary-general and his wife, Miette. It should be noted the Moshe Sharon is also a leading right-wing Israeli ideologue with several extremist views.

> DUE TO his absence abroad, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was unable to attend the first celebration in Jerusalem of Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i new year. Even though Sharon couldn't make it, Moshe Sharon, the incumbent of the Baha'i chair of studies at the Hebrew University, was there, as were numerous representatives of the HU, which was the first and thus far only university in the world to establish a chair in Baha'i studies.
>
> Sharon welcomed the presence of yet another monotheistic faith in this part of the world, noting that it is largely composed of the best of the other monotheistic beliefs.
>
> Baha'i International Community secretary-general Albert Lincoln who, together with his wife, Joan, Jerusalem Baha'i representative Kern Wisman and his wife, Barbara, and Murray Smith, BIC deputy secretary-general and his wife, Miette, were the main part of the extensive reception committee

welcoming guests at the Inbal Hotel, noted that in two months' time, some 3,000 Baha'i members from around the globe will flock to Haifa, site of the Baha'i world center, for the inauguration and illumination of the new terraced gardens.

A magnificent visual feast, the gardens, funded by Baha'i communities worldwide, constitute the most ambitious and expensive of Baha'i projects to date.

Attending the new year celebrations were Foreign Minister and Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who dropped in and dropped out, colliding at the exit with Pnina Herzog, president of the International Council of Women, whom he kissed on each cheek; former director-general of the Foreign Ministry Eytan Bentsur, Chilean Ambassador Sally Bendersky Schachner, Czech Ambassador Daniel Kumermann and his wife, Jarmila, counselor at the British embassy Nicolas Marden and his wife, Melanie, and Piotr Puchta, counsellor at the Polish embassy, who was anticipating the arrival of Andrzej Pruszkowski, the mayor of Lublin, and Adam Wlodarczyk, the mayor of Radom, both important places in Jewish history, who will be attending the 21st Jerusalem Conference of Mayors which opens Sunday.

Also present were attorney Daniel Jacobson, Avinoam Brog, the brother of former prime minister Ehud Barak, Counselor at the Yugoslav Embassy Sonja Asanovic Todorovic and Rabbi David Rosen, who was "over the moon" about his first granddaughter Imbar, born last Saturday and named after her great-grandmother. Although the name is a Hebrew one, in English the acronym is In Memory of Bella Rosen.

Moshe Sharon was born in Haifa on December 18, 1937. He joined the faculty of Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1965 and would go on to earn a Ph.D. at the same institution in 1971. He served as an Arab Affairs adviser to Prime Minister Menachem Begin and served in the Ministry of Defense, during which took part in the negotiations for peace with Egypt. Sharon established the Centre of Jewish Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, which he directed while serving as director of the

World Zionist Organization branch in Johannesburg. In 1999 he was appointed to the chair of Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University. Sharon serves as a policy expert for the Ariel Center for Policy Research. He and his wife, Judy, have six children.

Moshe Sharon has written about early Islamic history and the development of Shia Islam. He is a specialist in Arabic epigraphy and papyrology, with his opus being *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae* . In 2005 he published the first translation into Hebrew of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and included a study of the history and theology of the religion.

Frequently interviewed by Israeli media, he has been called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar." Among his political views is that there is "no possibility of peace between Israel and the Palestinians whatsoever, for ever" and that peace agreements with Arabs are "pieces of paper, parts of tactics, strategies...with no meaning." Moshe Sharon opposed the Oslo peace accords and believes the dismantling the Israeli settlements, which he terms "expulsions," serve to "increase the appetite of the other side and only achieve the killing of Jews." He blames the Bosnians' being Muslim for the Yugoslav conflict of the 1990's and argues that "The only way to avoid military confrontation with Iran is to leave this military confrontation to powers bigger than Israel."

In the Israeli documentary film "Bahais in My Backyard," during an interview, Moshe Sharon denies the existence of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants in Israel. Despite Sharon's denial of the existence of such relatives, they do exist, and one of Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughters, Nigar Bahai Amsalem, is featured in the film . The denial of these descendants, no less by a purported academic who is "Chair of Bahá'í Studies" at arguably Israel's best university, is curious.

Moshe Sharon has close connections with the Bahá'í Administrative Order. For example, in December 2000, Moshe Sharon and Hossain Danesh , the Rector of the now-defunct Landegg Academy , a Bahá'í-sponsored institution of higher education in Switzerland, co-convened the First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths at Hebrew University. The conference was covered in a Bahá'í World News Service article .

Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 1955, a letter stated about "the appointment of the Guardian's successor...He will be guided to make the right selection and in this matter will be infallible, and we must accept that or our whole understanding of the Will and Testament is in error."

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 23. On this date in 1955, a letter stated "We have had so many letters asking for clarification of the statement in David Hofman 's book about the relationship of the Hands of the Cause and the appointment of the Guardian's successor. The Guardian cabled us that the statement is incorrect in the book. He will be guided to make the right selection and in this matter will be infallible, and we must accept that or our whole understanding of the Will and Testament is in error."

Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 2005, the Second International Bahá’í Council submitted its response to the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center in the complaint of the NSA of the Bahá’ís of the United States against their use of the domain uhj.net. The complaint was denied on May 8, 2005.

Published on: March 20, 2026

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WIPO Domain Name Dispute: Case D2005-0214, "uhj.net" 2005-08-25 WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States v. Second International Bahá'í Council

Case No. D2005-0214

1. The Parties

The Complainant is National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation with an office in Evanston, Illinois, United States of America. Complainant is represented by Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione, Chicago, Illinois, United States of America.

The Respondent is Second International Bahá'í Council, an entity with an address in Missoula, Montana, United States of America, represented by Neal Chase of Missoula, Montana, United States of America.

1. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name, <uhj.net>, is registered with iHoldings.com Inc., doing business as DotRegistrar.com.

1. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on February 24, 2005. On February 25, 2005, the Center transmitted, by e-mail, to DotRegistrar.com a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On February 28, 2005, DotRegistrar.com transmitted to the Center, by e-mail, its verification, confirming that Respondent is listed as the registrant of the domain name, indicating that it had "locked" the domain name, confirming several details of its registration agreement, and providing the Center with contact information for the registrant. The Center verified that the Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Policy"), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with Rules 2(a) and 4(a), the Center formally notified Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on March 3, 2005. In accordance with Rule 5(a), the Response was due on March 23, 2005. The Response was filed with the Center on March 23, 2005.

The Center appointed Debra J. Stanek as the sole panelist in this matter on April 22, 2004. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence required by the Center to ensure compliance with Rule 7.

On April 1, 2005, Complainant submitted to the Center, by e-mail, a request to provide a reply, stating that Respondent's submission had made "several inaccurate and confusing statements" that "may need to be addressed."

Because Complainant had indicated that it had not sent a copy of its communication to Respondent, the Center forwarded the request to Respondent. On April 8, 2005, Respondent submitted to the Center, by e-mail, its opposition to the request.

1. Factual Background

The Bahá'í faith, to which both parties to this dispute claim to adhere, was founded in the mid-1800s.

According to Complainant, in 1963, members of the Complainant, along with members of other National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís around the world, created an institution called the "Universal House of Justice." The Universal House of Justice is apparently the highest authority of the Bahá'í faith and has its headquarters in Haifa, Israel.

Complainant owns a United States federal trademark registration, issued in 1965, for the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE for publications. Complainant also claims to have used THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with "other religious activities" involving the Bahá'í faith.

According to the Respondent, the term "Universal House of Justice" is defined, in the will of the founder of the Bahá'í faith and other documents related to its establishment and institutions, as an entity whose president is a descendant of King David, the king of Israel during biblical times. Respondent claims to be a descendant of David and therefore the leader of the "true" Universal House of Justice for the Bahá'í faith.

Respondent registered the <uhj.net> domain name in 2000. Visitors to the " www.uhj.net " website are presented with a page that identifies the site as "The Official Website of the Universal House of Justice." The home page includes a photograph of a Bahá'í shrine located in Israel and a quotation to the effect that the president of the Universal House of Justice must be a descendant of King David and that such leadership distinguishes "the true UHJ from fakes, frauds, and imitations."

1. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant makes the following contentions:

Complainant has been authorized by the Universal House of Justice to serve as the highest authority for the Bahá'í faith in the United States. In addition, the Universal

House of Justice has authorized Complainant, exclusively, to use the symbols of the Bahá'í faith in the United States.

The disputed domain name, <uhj.net>, is confusingly similar to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE trademark, which has been used extensively for many years. The acronym "uhj" used by Respondent is recognized and used by followers of the Bahá'í faith to refer to THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark.

Respondent is using "uhj" as an acronym for THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE trademark without the permission or consent of Complainant. The home page for <uhj.net> is identified as "The Official Website of the Universal House of Justice," depicts one of the holiest of Bahá'í shrines, and contains a link labeled "Click here to contact the UHJ" that leads visitors to an e-mail address that is not the address of Complainant or the Universal House of Justice in Israel.

Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. Respondent does not own trademark applications or registrations for the marks THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE or UHJ and is not known by either name. Instead, Respondent is using the domain name to divert those seeking Complainant's website and Respondent has caused actual confusion among followers of the Bahá'í faith.

Respondent registered and is using the domain name in bad faith. Respondent has diverted those seeking the official website of the Bahá'í faith and used misleading designations to confuse followers of the Bahá'í faith and to disrupt Complainant's organization. Further, the content of Respondent's website is not in accord with the teachings of the Bahá'í faith.

B. Respondent

Respondent contends:

Pursuant to various documents, Respondent is the successor to property of the Bahá'í faith, including its intellectual property, because, among other things, he is a descendant of King David. Complainant does not have a right to use the name "The Universal House of Justice," or any Bahá'í property, intellectual or otherwise.

Complainant's registration of the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE was in bad faith, done with the intention of hijacking Respondent's rights.

Respondent is using the domain name in good faith to promote itself as the true Universal House of Justice. Its website is intended to distinguish it from the Complainant; it explicitly refers to the fact that the "true UHJ" must have as its president a descendant of King David.

Respondent has rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. For many years before notice of the dispute, Respondent prepared to use and used the name "Universal House of Justice" and "UHJ" for its legitimate religious, non-commercial purposes as the "true and legal" Universal House of Justice.

Respondent is making legitimate non-commercial, fair use of the domain name, without any intent of commercial gain or any attempt to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark at issue.

Respondent is not affiliated with Complainant and has no desire to confuse those who follow Complainant's teachings. The home page of Respondent's website discloses its views regarding the "true" Universal House of Justice, headed by a descendant of King David, and other "fakes, frauds, and imitations."

The domain name was not registered or acquired primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to Complainant. The domain name was not registered in order to prevent Complainant from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name and Respondent has not engaged in a pattern of such conduct.

Complainant is engaging in reverse domain name hijacking.

1. Discussion and Findings

A. Procedural Matters

As noted above, Complainant has requested an opportunity to submit a reply to respond to "inaccurate and confusing statements" in the Response. 1 As an initial matter, neither the Rules nor the Supplementary Rules provide for the filing of a reply.

Although litigants and parties in arbitrations may have a right of reply under the rules of other forums, ICANN chose a different procedure for these proceedings that calls

for only a Complaint and a Response. Among other things, this more truncated procedure allows for more rapid and cost effective resolution of domain name challenges. [citation omitted].

See Document Technologies, Inc. v. International Electronic Communications Inc. (WIPO Case No. D2000-0270). Rule 12 does, however, permit a panel to request further documents and statements. Such requests always involve balancing the provisions of Rule 10, which require a panel to ensure both that each party has a "fair opportunity" to present its case and that the proceeding take place with "due expedition."

The Panel is of the view that supplementary submissions are appropriate only in ‘exceptional' cases, such as where new, pertinent facts arose or new, relevant legal authority was reported after a party's submission. See Document Technologies, supra. To seek or accept supplemental submissions under other circumstances undercuts the purpose of the streamlined procedures established by ICANN.

Complainant's cited reason for its seeking to supplement its initial submission was that Respondent made "inaccurate and confusing statements" that "may need to be addressed." In the Panel's view, the cited reason does not fit within the limited circumstances under which supplementary submissions are appropriate.

B. Burden of Proof

In order to prevail, Complainant must prove:

(i) The <uhj.net> domain name is identical or confusingly similar to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark; and

(ii) Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the <uhj.net> domain name; and

(iii) The domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

Policy, paragraph 4(a). The Policy sets out four sets of circumstances that may evidence a Respondent's bad faith registration and use under Paragraph 4(a)(iii), see Policy, paragraph 4(b), as well as examples of circumstances that may evidence a Respondent's rights or legitimate interests in a domain name, see Policy, paragraph 4(c).

(1) Identical or Confusingly Similar

Complainant must establish that the disputed domain name is either identical or confusingly similar to its mark. For purposes of considering identity or confusing similarity, the ".net" top-level domain is not relevant.

Complainant's mark is THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. Complainant does not argue that the <uhj.net> domain name is identical to its mark and it is not. Further, Complainant does not claim any trademark rights in "uhj" and has not identified any use by it of "uhj" in any manner, including to identify itself, its activities, the institution in Israel, or the activities of that institution. Complainant must, therefore, establish that the domain name is "confusingly similar" to its mark.

Neither the Policy nor the Rules expressly articulate a test for determining "confusing similarity" and other panels have applied different tests. Some have limited the test to determining the degree of resemblance of the domain name and mark at issue as to "sight, sound, and meaning." Others have considered the degree of resemblance along with factors such as the distinctiveness of the mark, how well-known the mark is, how long the mark has been used, and the nature of the goods and services with which the mark is used.

This Panel has previously concluded that only the degree of resemblance between the Complainant's mark and the disputed domain name should determine confusing similarity. See Columbia Insurance Company v. Pampered Gourmet, WIPO Case No. D2004-0649. As stated in Columbia Insurance, this is because paragraph 4(a) refers only to the identity or confusing similarity while paragraph 4(b)(iv), in contrast, expressly refers to "likelihood of confusion . . . as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement." Further, the Policy is intended to be international in scope, which suggests that -- absent express language -- a panel should be cautious about interpreting the Policy as incorporating a test that may not exist in a number of jurisdictions. See Bradford & Bingley Plc v. Registrant info@fashionID.com 987654321, WIPO Case No. D2002-0499.

Complainant argues that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark. For the reasons set out below, the Panel concludes that "uhj" does not resemble THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE in

appearance, pronunciation, or meaning.

The disputed domain name incorporates only the initial letters of three of the five words that make up the mark -- "uhj" -- resulting in significant differences in appearance and pronunciation between the two. The acronym "uhj" has no inherent meaning. Acronyms, by their nature, may stand for more than one combination of words. Although Complainant has provided copies of e-mail messages that seem to suggest that some members of the Bahá'í faith use "uhj" as an abbreviation for the words "Universal House of Justice," the Panel finds that these messages do not establish that the acronym has the same meaning as the words.

First, the only evidence of Complainant's trademark rights is its federal registration for use of the mark in connection with publications. Yet the messages supplied by Complainant do not appear to use the acronym "UHJ" to refer to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE publications or mark. Instead, they appear to refer to the institution, the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel (for example, requests for prayers, a request to visit shrines in Israel, etc.). Complainant has asserted that it uses THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with "other religious activities" involving the Bahá'í faith. However, Complainant has not provided any evidence of use of the mark in connection with those other activities. In the absence of any evidence, Complainant has not established common law rights in THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with those unspecified activities, rendering the e-mail messages ambiguous at best.

Second, all of the evidence consists of e-mail messages. The use of acronyms and abbreviations in such messages is common. The Panel is not convinced that this evidence supports a more widespread use and understanding that "UHJ" signifies Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE pamphlets or Complainant.

Finally, relying on the understanding of members of the Bahá'í faith to establish the "meaning" of the acronym, is inconsistent with the test of confusing similarity that this Panel has adopted.

The decision in Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Council of the United States v. Alex Yip, WIPO Case No. D2004-0121, supports the Panel's conclusion. In that somewhat analogous case, the panel rejected an argument that the disputed domain name, <

svdpusacouncil.org>, was confusingly similar to the registered mark, SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL U.S.A. ST V DE P. The panel noted that "only a part of the registered mark is incorporated into the disputed domain name, and the ‘svdp' portion of the domain name shows up as ST V DE P in the registered mark." Here too, only a portion of the registered THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark is incorporated into the disputed domain name.

However, in St. Vincent de Paul, the complainant also contended that over the years, it had been known by the acronym "SVDP." The panel concluded that the acronym had acquired sufficient common law rights to merit protection because it appeared that the acronym had been "used by Complainant for many years to identify it and the charitable services provided by Complainant." In contrast here, there is no evidence that Complainant has ever, at any time, itself used "uhj" to identify itself or its services. Further, and as discussed above, the e-mail messages that Complainant has characterized as showing the use, by members of the Bahá'í faith, of the acronym to identify Complainant are ambiguous.

Complainant cites two decisions by other panels for the proposition that a domain name that is an acronym of a trademark is confusingly similar to the trademark. In Successful Money Management Seminars, Inc. v. Financial Services of California, Claim No. FA0006000095042 (National Arbitration Forum, July 31, 2000), the panel stated that <fssr.com> was confusingly similar to the FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT trademark, for which it was an acronym. However, in that case, the panel's observation was not necessary to the decision because the complainant owned a trademark registration for the mark FSSR and the Panel does not find it persuasive here.

In VeriSign, Inc. v. Michael Brook, WIPO Case No. D2000-1139, the panel concluded that various "vrsn" domain names were confusingly similar to the complainant's VERISIGN trademark. The Panel believes that it is more aptly described as an abbreviation of the mark.2 This distinction is important because an abbreviated form of a trademark is more likely than an acronym to resemble a mark in sight, sound, and meaning. In any case, in the Panel's view, "vrsn" more closely resembles the mark VERISIGN than "uhj" resembles the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

In addition, although Verisign did not use "vrsn" as a trademark, Verisign did use "VRSN" as the symbol under which shares of its stock were publicly traded. As noted above, Complainant has not made any comparable claim or presented any evidence showing that it uses "uhj" in any manner, much less as a mark or other type of identifier.

Under the circumstances of this case, the Panel finds that Complainant has not met its burden of establishing that Respondent's domain name is confusingly similar to a mark in which Complainant has rights.

(2) Rights or Legitimate Interests

As noted above, a complainant must establish each of the three elements outlined in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy in order to prevail. In light of the conclusion that Complainant has not established the first element, it is not necessary to address the issue of Respondent's claim to have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

(3) Registered and Used in Bad Faith

For the same reasons outlined above, it is not necessary to address the issue of bad faith.

(4) Reverse Domain Name Hijacking

Respondent asserts that Complainant is engaged in reverse domain name hijacking. Reverse domain name hijacking is defined in Rule 1 as "using the Policy in bad faith to attempt to deprive a registered domain-name holder of a domain name."

The Panel finds this case presented challenging issues (although not all are discussed in this decision). The Panel concludes that the Complaint was not an attempt at reverse domain name hijacking.

1. Decision

For all the foregoing reasons, the Complaint is denied.

Debra J. Stanek Sole Panelist

Dated: May 8, 2005

1 Complainant did not send a copy of its request directly to Respondent, apparently believing Respondent had a "religious objection" to communicating with it. While the Panel appreciates Complainant's sensitivity, it did not interpret the statement that Respondent had, consistent with Respondent's religious beliefs, ignored Complainant's cease and desist letter, to be an objection to receiving communications. Moreover, the Panel reminds Complainant of Rule 2(h): "Any communication by . . . a Party shall be copied to the other Party, the Panel and the Provider, as the case may be" (emphasis added). 2 Compare Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 10th edition, s.v. "acronym" (http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=acronym) (defining "acronym" as: "a word (as NATO, radar, or snafu) formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term; also : an abbreviation (as FBI) formed from initial letters") with Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 10th edition, s.v. "abbreviation (http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=abbreviation) (defining "abbreviation" as: "2 : a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole <amt is an abbreviation for amount>").

Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 1891, Jessie Revell, who later was a member of the International Bahá'í Council, serving as its Treasurer, was born.

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 23. On this date in 1891, Jessie Revell , who later was a member of the International Bahá'í Council, serving as its Treasurer, was born.

Jessie Revell , along with her sister Ethel, became a Bahá'í in Philadelphia around 1906 through Mrs. Annie McKinney, when she attended the firesides of Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham . On the evening when Jessie first heard Mrs. Brittingham speak on the Faith, Jessie followed her to the door as the speaker departed and said, 'I cannot remember all you said tonight, but I want what you have!'

Jessie Revell was once addressed by 'Abdu'l-Baha in these words:

> "O thou who art firm in the Covenant! ... Notwithstanding the lack of time, I write thee this letter that thou mayest know how dear thou art to me. As thou art brilliant and pure and hast no wish but to serve the Cause of God and promulgate the divine teachings, I pray and entreat at the threshold of God and beg for thee limitless assistance and bounty. ... Thou must engage in those regions, day and night, in service. ... As to the children with whom thou art speaking, thy pure breath will undoubtedly exert its influence upon them. ..." ('Abdu'l-Baha, Star of the West, vol. X, p. 317)

Jessie Revell's brilliant record of service to the Cause of Baha'u'llah, extending from early in the century, came to an end with her passing in Haifa on April 14, 1966. Her story is best told in the words of her devoted sister, Ethel Revell.

"My mother, my sister and I first heard of the Faith in Philadelphia -- it was approximately 1906 -- through Mrs. Annie McKinney, and attended the firesides of Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham. On the evening when Jessie first heard Mrs. Brittingham speak on the Faith, Jessie followed her to the door as the speaker departed and said, 'I cannot remember all you said tonight, but I want what you have!'

When she accepted the Faith she wrote to ‘Abdu’l-Baha and mentioned that our father had passed away when we were very young. The Master replied -- I believe in these exact words -- ‘The real fatherhood is the spiritual fatherhood. Therefore rest thou assured that thou art the beloved daughter.’

“In the early days of her Baha’i life, as there was but little literature available to the friends, Jessie, who was then employed in an office, would spend her evenings typing copies of Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Baha and sharing them with the Baha’is, who in turn would recopy them and pass them along to other believers.

“Jessie’s dearest wish was to be of service to the Cause. ‘Abdu’l-Baha visited Philadelphia in June, 1912. After speaking to the friends on Sunday morning at the Rittenhouse Hotel where He was staying, the Master took a short walk, during which time Jessie and a brother visited the various newspaper offices with material on the Faith which appeared in the papers the following day.

“During the meeting at the hotel, ‘Abdu’l-Baha said to our mother that He would see us at nine o’clock the following morning at our house. Excitedly, everyone spread the news and the humble home was crowded. The Master spoke to the friends most beautifully and touchingly about the life of Baha’u’llah. Afterwards He went upstairs, and each one had a brief interview with him. When Jessie’s turn came, she said ‘I would like to be of service in the Kingdom.’ ‘Abdu’l-Baha replied, ‘You are a smiling angel; you will be of service in the Kingdom.’

“Jessie visited ‘Abdu’l-Baha in New York City a few days before He sailed from America. As she was taking leave the Master said that He would see her again. Jessie always lived in the thought of again seeing Him on this earth. In 1921 she received a Tablet in which He told her she had permission to make her pilgrimage in the winter of that year. Everything was in order: the expense of her voyage was the loving gift of a Baha’i friend; her employer consented to her leave of absence and agreed to hold open her position until she returned; her plans were all made. When the news reached her of the ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Baha she was completely heartbroken. Slowly, painfully she reconciled herself to the realization that her meeting with the Master was not to be on this physical plane. At the suggest ion of Mrs. Brittingham she postponed her pilgrimage for a few years and was very happy she did so, because

when she arrived in Haifa she was able to meet the beloved Guardian which would not have been the case had she gone at the time originally planned.

“One day during her pilgrimage Shoghi Effendi invited her to stroll up Mount Carmel with him to visit the Shrine of the Bab. On that walk he said that the Baha’is must make a superhuman effort. Jessie often said there was something about the way the Guardian said ‘superhuman’ that engraved it for all time in her heart.

“Jessie constantly searched for ways of meeting souls who were longing for truth. With this object in view she had just completed a course in public speaking when the invitation came to travel to Haifa to assist the beloved Guardian. When she told of receiving this cable, she said she believed she lost consciousness for a moment, it was so overwhelming.”

A tribute to Jessie Revell by Mr. and Mrs. Lyall Hadden published in the Bulletin of the Spiritual Assembly of Philadelphia at the time of her death describes her early services in that community:

“Jessie’s entire life was one of service to the Faith, first here in Pennsylvania where she served for many years on the Spiritual Assembly of Philadelphia and the regional teaching committee, and later in Haifa where she and Ethel were summoned by the Guardian in 1951.

“Her years of service in Haifa, her many travels throughout the world on behalf of the Faith, are well known to all, but we in Pennsylvania have a deeper knowledge of, and a great love for, this little person who gave of her time and energy so cheerfully and efficiently. No distance was too far for Jessie to travel; no demand upon her time too great in service to Baha’u’llah.

“When we first met the Revells back in 1936 both Jessie and Ethel were carrying out ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s instructions in a most energetic and able manner. We had just arrived in the Philadelphia area from New York where we had been briefly introduced to the Faith. Almost immediately upon our arrival Jessie, Ethel and their mother came to call upon us, and every week thereafter these dear and faithful souls traveled the twenty miles to our home to further our instruction in the Faith of Baha’u’llah. After we declared our faith they, true to the Master’s wish, continued to visit every Saturday

morning to instruct our three small sons. So effective were their teaching methods that at one children's session at Davison Baha'i School our boys were asked to refrain from raising their hands to answer questions and let some of the other children have the opportunity. 'Thy pure breath will undoubtedly exert its influence upon them. ...'

"Many times we met the Revell sisters and drove them to Reading where they had engaged a room in order to hold Baha'i meetings. Whether one person attended, or a dozen, or no one at all, those two devoted believers were always there on the designated night, and our own knowledge was strengthened and deepened."

It is fitting that Jessie Revell's services in the Holy Land be glimpsed through the eyes of one of the countless pilgrims whose hearts she won. An account of her passing appeared in the Alaskan Baha'i News, September, 1966:

"Late in 1950 two self-effacing little ladies from Philadelphia, Ethel and Jessie Revell, received a cablegram: WELCOME YOUR PRESENCE HAIFA -- SHOGHI. These two lovely souls were overwhelmed and puzzled, but they soon began to pack. ...

"For Jessie, this was a return to the land of her heart's desire. ... What kind of woman was this 'little giant', barely five feet tall, who earned the trust, love and admiration of Shoghi Effendi, and became a loyal companion of Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum and the friend and counsellor of every pilgrim? The beloved Guardian received many letters from American believers but it was the rare Baha'i who, like Jessie, would write to him, as she did in 1948, to thank him for his peerless translation of Prayers and Meditations.

"En route to Haifa the Revell sisters found an additional opportunity to proclaim the Faith. Three hundred miles east of the Azores, a floating observance of World Religion Day was held on the S.S. LaGuardia by Jessie and Ethel. Fifty people of various nationalities attended in response to the invitation listed in the ship's calendar."

Jessie Revell's services in Haifa were manifold: she was entrusted by the Guardian shortly after her arrival with the task of sending and collecting all his mail; this was a task to which he attached great importance as during his absences from the Holy Land no one had access to him except his "postman" whose integrity must be of the highest order. Even after the Guardian's passing she continued to collect the mail, in

spite of her age, until the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In 1951 she was appointed treasurer of the International Baha'i Council by the Guardian and after its election in 1961 continued to hold the same office. Her services to the Guardian and to the World Center in these and other capacities brought her in contact with many people in Haifa where she was widely known and respected as a Baha'i.

"How Jessie loved to be with the pilgrims," Ethel Revell testifies. "She loved to look after their comfort and received them with a loving welcome, visiting with them, helping them on their shopping trips. At times the pilgrims arrived very late at night from certain countries. On one occasion a group of dear pilgrims came at about eleven-thirty at night. It was raining heavily. They were shown their rooms and made comfortable by Jessie. The next morning Jessie awakened to find she had slept peacefully all night in a wet raincoat!"

A pilgrim writes, "She won the hearts of all the pilgrims and saw the best, the true Baha'i, in everyone. In her quiet, unassuming way she would seek every avenue to serve her beloved Faith. No task was too great or too small. Pilgrims around the world treasure the picture of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Philadelphia or some other small token from the Revell sisters. Dearly loved by the people of Haifa, they would voice concern: 'Please talk Miss Jessie into getting a car -- a little one will do; she goes back and forth so much; I worry for her.' A friend of 'Miss Jessie's' would get a special price in the souvenir shops. Everyone in Haifa knew her; everyone loved her. Her calm, assured manner, regardless of the turbulence about her, seemed to be in natural setting in Haifa. While the Shrines, of course, stand apart as the very core of pilgrimage, Haifa unfailingly brings to mind Jessie Revell."

Before his passing Shoghi Effendi had himself announced that Jessie Revell would attend the Intercontinental Conference to be held in the United States in 1958, in addition to the Hand of the Cause he had delegated to represent him on that occasion. In 1961 she accompanied Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum on her trip to Australia to open the Mother Temple of the Antipodes to public worship. When Amatu'l-Baha was taken ill, Jessie Revell, at her request, visited the New Zealand Baha'i community in her stead, bringing the spirit of the beloved Guardian to all the friends there.

“I trust and pray that some day you may be enabled to visit Persia, and there render a distinct service to the cause,” Shoghi Effendi wrote to her on December 17, 1928. “Wherever you are, the Beloved will watch over you and sustain you, and you must feel encouraged to realize that your services, your faith and constancy, will in time be fully rewarded.”

Ethel’s words describe the joy her sister experienced in realizing this long-held hope:

“Persia and Turkey were the last countries which Jessie visited. She traveled to Iran just seven months before she passed away. To be in the land of Baha’u’llah was such a joy to her, to visit all the Holy Places such a sacred experience. Then too, the believers were so thoughtful, kind and hospitable in a quiet and efficient manner that she really felt at home. It seemed to me that with that accomplished, she in a way relaxed somewhat. A few days before she departed she said to me, ‘Since I went to Persia, I seem to be living there all the time.’”

Jessie Revell died in Haifa on April 14, 1966.

Upon her death the Universal House of Justice cabled the following message:

> WITH PROFOUND GRIEF ANNOUNCE PASSING JESSIE REVELL HER TIRELESS STEADFAST DEVOTION FAITH SINCE BEFORE MASTER'S VISIT AMERICAN CONTINENT EARNED LOVE TRUST ADMIRATION SHOGHI EFFENDI CROWNED BY APPOINTMENT INTERNATIONAL BAHA'I COUNCIL DISTINGUISHED BY SERVICE TREASURER BOTH APPOINTED ELECTED COUNCILS. URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS TRIBUTE UNFORGETTABLE EXEMPLARY SERVICES FAITH.

Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 1955, Charlotte Linfoot wrote "...in David Hofman's book about...the appointment of the Guardian's successor. The Guardian cabled us that the statement is incorrect in the book. He will be guided to make the right selection and in this matter will be infallible..."

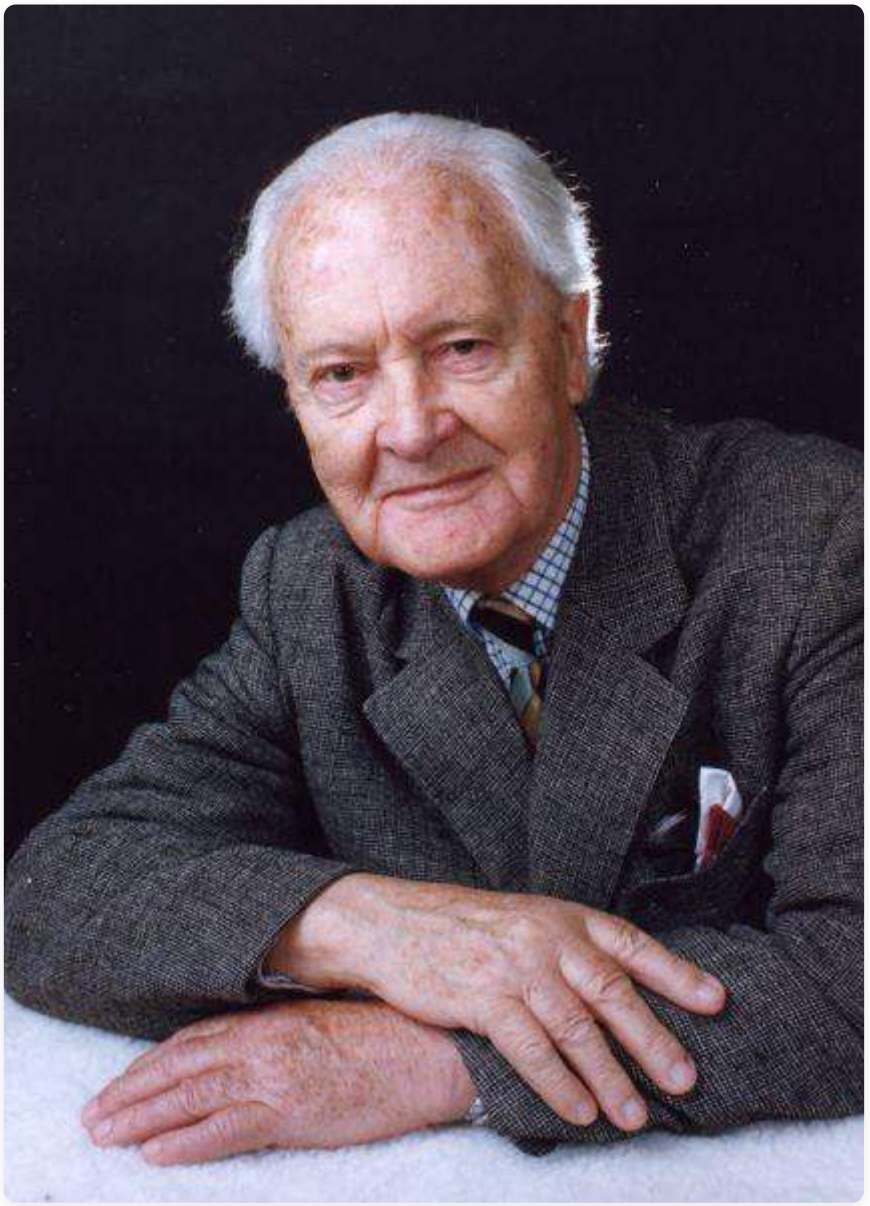
Published on: March 20, 2026

March 23. On this date in 1955, Charlotte Linfoot wrote "We have had so many letters asking for clarification of the statement in David Hofman 's book about the relationship of the Hands of the Cause and the appointment of the Guardian's successor. The Guardian cabled us that the statement is incorrect in the book. He will be guided to make the right selection and in this matter will be infallible, and we must accept that or our whole understanding of the Will and Testament is in error."

> This is a note from a letter dated March 23, 1955 by Charlotte Linfoot to Anna Stevenson , attached to the pilgrim notes of Valera Allen, citing a cable from Shoghi Effendi that he would be infallible in his choice of successor. From copy by Anna Stevenson.
>
> > "We have had so many letters asking for clarification of the statement in David Hofman 's book about the relationship of the Hands of the Cause and the appointment of the Guardian's successor. The Guardian cabled us that the statement is incorrect in the book . He will be guided to make the right selection and in this matter will be infallible, and we must accept that or our whole understanding of the Will and Testament is in error."

Charlotte Linfoot was born in 1895, and from 1953 until her death in 1976, she served as a member and assistant secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. She also simultaneously served on the editorial committees of *Bahá'í News*

and the *Bahá'í World*.



Comments

No comments.

March 23. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The conditions of the world have prepared numerous souls for the light of divine guidance, and it now remains for the Bahá'ís, through their strenuous efforts, to lead these seeking souls to the bourn of immortality."

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 23. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The conditions of the world have prepared numerous souls for the light of divine guidance, and it now remains for the Bahá'ís, through their strenuous efforts, to lead these seeking souls to the bourn of immortality."

> 23 March 1954 [Cynthia and Edgar Olson - United States of America]
>
> ...If the Bahá'ís arise with the same spirit of dedication and consecration as those who have gone to foreign fields, victories will be won. Those living in large cities should move to the goal cities of the American continent, and all should teach with enthusiasm.
>
> The conditions of the world have prepared numerous souls for the light of divine guidance, and it now remains for the Bahá'ís, through their strenuous efforts, to lead these seeking souls to the bourn of immortality.
>
> ...The Beloved Guardian sincerely hopes that you and your husband will be able to devote yourselves to the interests of the Ten Year Crusade . He feels that the most important service anyone can render is to pioneer in one of the virgin areas of the Crusade ...If the National Assembly feels that you can accomplish more for the home-front Crusade by moving to the Wilmette area and assisting in the publicity work on a national scale... the Guardian feels that it will be satisfactory.
>
> Cynthia Olson was Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Mariana Islands. She

arrived on 2 May 1954, her husband following later.

Comments

No comments.

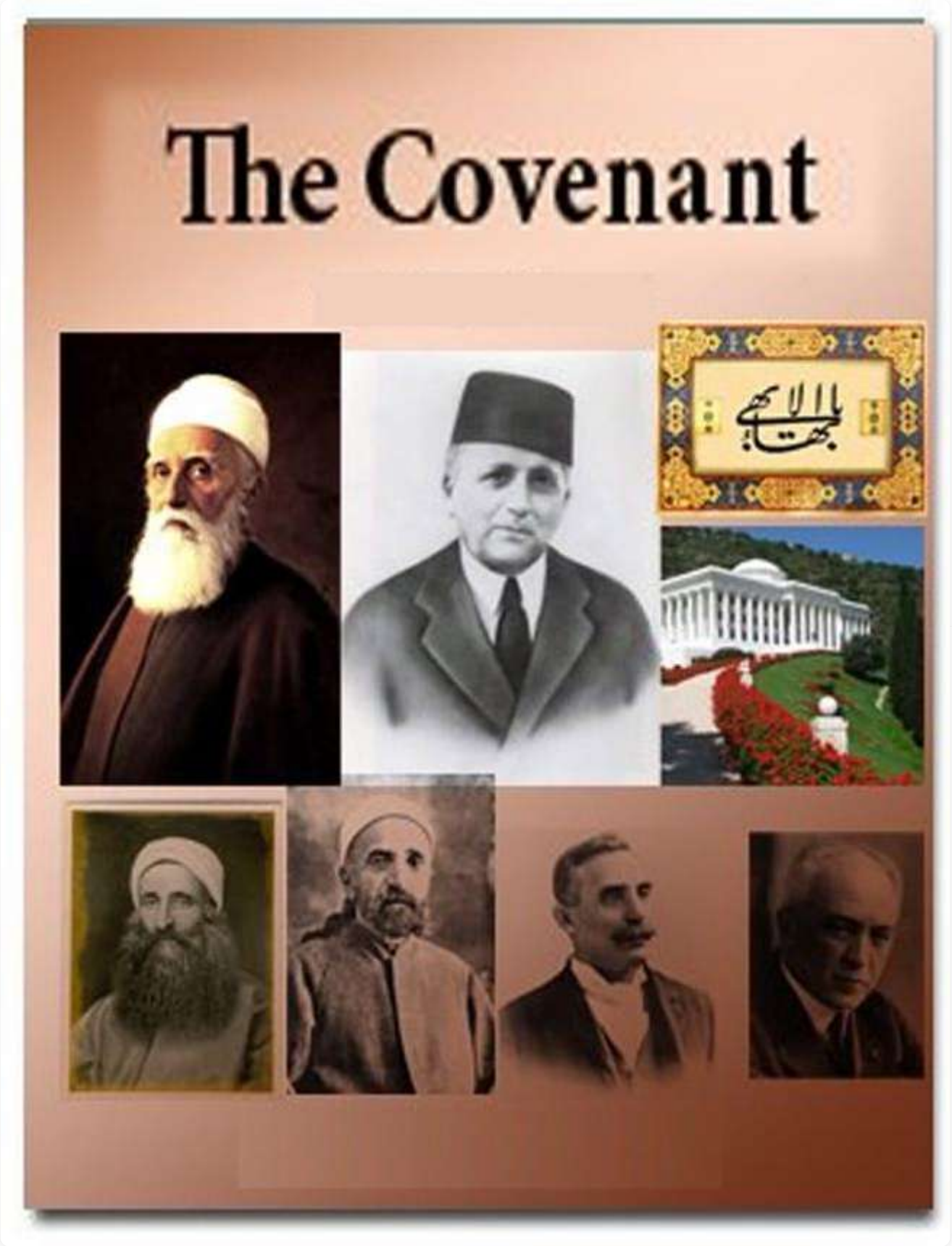
March 23. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "A Covenant in the religious sense is a binding agreement between God and man, whereby God requires of man certain behaviour in return for which He guarantees certain blessings...the Greater Covenant...the Lesser Covenant..."

Published on: March 20, 2026

March 23. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "A Covenant in the religious sense is a binding agreement between God and man, whereby God requires of man certain behaviour in return for which He guarantees certain blessings...the Greater Covenant which every Manifestation of God makes with His followers, promising that in the fulness of time a new Manifestation will be sent...the Lesser Covenant that a Manifestation of God makes with His followers that they will accept His appointed successor after Him."

> A Covenant in the religious sense is a binding agreement between God and man, whereby God requires of man certain behaviour in return for which He guarantees certain blessings, or whereby He gives man certain bounties in return for which He takes from those who accept them an undertaking to behave in a certain way. There is, for example, the Greater Covenant which every Manifestation of God makes with His followers, promising that in the fulness of time a new Manifestation will be sent, and taking from them the undertaking to accept Him when this occurs. There is also the Lesser Covenant that a Manifestation of God makes with His followers that they will accept His appointed successor after Him. If they do so, the Faith can remain united and pure. If not, the Faith becomes divided and its force spent. It is a Covenant of this kind that Bahá'u'lláh made with His followers regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá and that 'Abdu'l-Bahá perpetuated through the Administrative Order...

(23 March 1975, from a letter written by the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)



Comments

No comments.

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> Education in the Law of Ḥuqúqu’lláh
>
> 23 MARCH 1989
>
> To all National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> Dear Bahá’í Friends,
>
> One of the vital goals of the Six Year Plan is the education of the believers in the Law of Ḥuqúqu’lláh, observance of which has a profound spiritual effect beyond the practical benefits for the work of the Cause.
>
> The Trustee of Ḥuqúqu’lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. ‘Alí-Muḥammad Varqá, has, at the request of the Universal House of Justice, been developing the structure of his Deputies and Representatives around the world. In addition to their function of receiving Ḥuqúqu’lláh from the friends, these Deputies and Representatives share with the National Spiritual Assemblies the responsibility for educating all the believers in this Law. To achieve the best results there should be close and wholehearted collaboration between the National Spiritual Assemblies and the Deputies and Representatives of Ḥuqúqu’lláh in their countries. The House of Justice

is confident that these newly forged links will be greatly strengthened as the Bahá'í world enters the second half of the Six Year Plan , and assures you all of its prayers for your confirmation in your efforts to achieve this goal.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Comments

No comments.

March 24. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'í s "Vital significance of preeminent objective in European continent cannot be overemphasized. Intense, sustained, self-sacrificing efforts aimed at rapid consolidation of American Community's recently initiated fate-laden..."

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> Consolidation in Europe
>
> Overjoyed, grateful, proud of notable expansion of manifold activities in three continents. Vital significance of preeminent objective in European continent cannot be overemphasized. Intense, sustained, self-sacrificing efforts aimed at rapid consolidation of American Community's recently initiated fate-laden transatlantic enterprise are urgent, imperative, highly meritorious. Praying for such demonstration of heroism as will outshine exploits illuminating pages of American Bahá'í history in continents of Western Hemisphere.
>
> *[March 24, 1947]*

Comments

No comments.

March 24. On this day in 1949, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable stating "He was also very pleased to see the contact with the Esperantists is being maintained .... bring the Bahá'í Cause to many of their member's attention. Also, he hopes, it will lead to many of them becoming Bahá'ís in the future."

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March 24. On this day in 1949, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable stating "He was also very pleased to see the contact with the Esperantists is being maintained. This friendly cooperation with them, and attendance at their Congresses, is very good, and will no doubt bring the Bahá'í Cause to many of their member's attention. Also, he hopes, it will lead to many of them becoming Bahá'ís in the future."

J.E. Esselmont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the chapter entitled *Universal Language*:

> At an Esperanto banquet given in Paris in February 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:—
>
> Today one of the chief causes of the differences in Europe is the diversity of languages. We say this man is a German, the other is an Italian, then we meet an Englishman and then again a Frenchman. Although they belong to the same race, yet language is the greatest barrier between them. Were a universal auxiliary language in operation they would all be considered as one.
>
> His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh wrote about this international language more than forty years ago. He says that as long as an international language is not adopted, complete union between the various sections of the world will be unrealized, for we observe that misunderstandings keep people from mutual association, and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled

except through an international auxiliary language.

Generally speaking, the whole people of the Orient are not fully informed of events in the West, neither can the Westerners put themselves in sympathetic touch with the Easterners; their thoughts are enclosed in a casket—the international language will be the master key to open it. Were we in possession of a universal language, the Western books could easily be translated into that language, and the Eastern peoples be informed of their contents. In the same way the books of the East could be translated into that language for the benefit of the people in the West. The greatest means of progress towards the union of East and West will be a common language. It will make the whole world one home and become the strongest impulse for human advancement. It will upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity. It will make the earth one universal commonwealth. It will be the cause of love between the children of men. It will cause good fellowship between the various races.

Now, praise be to God that Dr. Zamenhof has invented the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of becoming the international means of communication. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for this noble effort; for in this way he has served his fellowmen well. With untiring effort and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees Esperanto will become universal. Therefore every one of us must study this language and spread it as far as possible so that day by day it may receive a broader recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world, and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that Esperanto will be adopted as the language of all the future international conferences and congresses, so that all people need acquire only two languages—one their own tongue and the other the international language. Then perfect union will be established between all the people of the world. Consider how difficult it is today to communicate with various nations. If one studies fifty languages one may yet travel

> **through a country and not know the language. Therefore I hope that you will make the utmost effort, so that this language of Esperanto may be widely spread.**

In the past, Bahá'ís were more active in learning and encouraging the learning of Esperanto, and the links between Esperanto and the Bahá'í Faith are numerous. Ehsan Yarshater, the ex-Bahá'í founder and editor of Encyclopedia Iranica , notes how as a child in Iran he learned and taught Esperanto and that when his mother was visiting Haifa he wrote her a letter in Persian as well as Esperanto. L.L. Zamenhof's daughter, Lidia Zamenhof was a convert to the Bahá'í Faith. At the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Agnes Baldwin Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used it to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences in Japan.

Due to the failure of Esperanto to gain significant traction, however, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements have been backtracked, such that Shoghi Effendi said

> Regarding the subject of Esperanto; it should be made clear to the believers that **while the teaching of that language has been repeatedly encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is no reference either from Him or from Bahá'u'lláh that can make us believe that it will necessarily develop into the international auxiliary language of the future.** Bahá'u'lláh has specified in His Writings that such a language will either have to be chosen from one of the existing languages, or an entirely new one should be created to serve as a medium of exchange between the nations and peoples of the world. Pending this final choice, the Bahá'ís are advised to study Esperanto only in consideration of the fact that the learning of this language can considerably facilitate intercommunication between individuals, groups and Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world in the present stage of the evolution of the Faith.

On January 29, 1904, Lidia Zamenhof , the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof , was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December

1938, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler , who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell , who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff , who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> 'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from

official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words* , pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> ...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.

Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:

> EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.

His response was decisive:

> APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]

Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:

> REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.

She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced *fellahin* , by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.

She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.

From the following section:

> Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:
>
> > Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]
>
> In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.

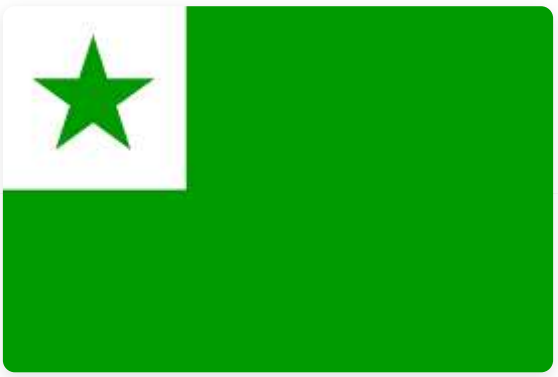
The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

> A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled

his American followers:

> HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]

She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.



Comments

No comments.

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The daughter of Persian parents, she was born in Haifa to a prominent Bahá'í lineage on March 24, 1935. Her father was Nayyir Afnan, son of Siyyid Ali Afnan and grandson of Hajjí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan, the brother-in-law of the Báb. Nayyir Afnan's mother was Furughiyyih Khanum, the daughter of Bahá'u'lláh from his third marriage to Gawhar Khanum. Her mother was Ruhangiz Afnan. Her maternal grandparents were Mírzá Hádí Shírází and Ḍíyá'íyyih Khánum, the eldest daughter of ' Abdu'l-Bahá and Munirih Khánum. Ruhangiz, having married an individual who had been declared a Covenant-breaker by ' Abdu'l-Bahá was in turn declared a Covenant-breaker by her brother, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

Maliheh Afnan moved to Beirut with her family in 1949. She received a BA from the American University of Beirut and a MA in Fine Arts from the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design in Washington, D.C.. Afnan lived in Kuwait from 1963 to 1966, in Beirut from 1966 to 1974 and in Paris from 1974 until 1997, when she moved to London.

Afnan's work has been shown primarily in France and in London. Her first solo show, in a Basel gallery in 1971, was organized by the American artist Mark Tobey. Her work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the British Museum in London, the Written Art Collection in Germany, the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and the BAII Bank Collection in Paris.

On March 16, 2016, an art exhibit opened in Dubai featuring her work among other artists.

She died in London on January 6, 2016, at the age of 80. Maliheh Afnan was buried at the New Southgate Cemetery in London, not far from the grave of her uncle, Shoghi Effendi, who had declared her mother a Covenant-breaker.

Comments

No comments.

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March 24. On this date in 1937, Mary Maxwell married Shoghi Effendi. The newlyweds made a trip to Switzerland and Shoghi Effendi introduced his young bride to his favorite sights in the country to which he would often travel. Mary Maxwell had arrived in Haifa in January 1937 with her mother, and she and Shoghi Effendi began a brief courtship. In February the couple were engaged, and Mary cabled her father to come as soon as he could to Haifa. On March 24 at the age of 26, Mary married Shoghi Effendi. The newlyweds made a trip to Switzerland and Shoghi Effendi introduced his young bride to his favorite sights in the country to which he would often travel.

From Chapter 6 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum 's book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith* , titled "The Deepest Ties" ...

> When 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mantle, as Head of the Faith, fell on Shoghi Effendi's shoulders a great change came over him. What the nature of that change was spiritually it is not for us — so infinitely remote in both station and stature — to either grasp or seek to define. Shoghi Effendi was never really intimate with anyone except the closest members of his family and, in the early days, those who acted as his help-mates and secretaries. As years went by and his burdens increased, even this intimacy grew less.
>
> Surely the simplicity of the marriage of Shoghi Effendi — reminiscent of the simplicity of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own marriage in the prison-city of 'Akka — should provide a thought-provoking example to the Bahá'ís everywhere. No one, with the exception of his parents, my parents and a brother and two

sisters of his living in Haifa, knew it was to take place. He felt strongly urged to keep it a secret, knowing from past experience how much trouble any major event in the Cause invariably stirred up. It was therefore a stunning surprise to both the servants and the local Bahá'ís when his chauffeur drove him off, with me beside him, to visit the Holy Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh on the afternoon of March 24, 1937. His heart drew him to that Most Sacred Spot on earth at such a moment in his life. I remember I was dressed entirely in black for this unique occasion. I wore a white lace blouse, but otherwise I was a typical example of the way oriental women dressed to go out into the streets in those days, the custom being to wear black. Although I was from the West Shoghi Effendi desired me to fit into the pattern of the life in his house — which was a very oriental one — as naturally and inconspicuously as possible and I was only too happy to comply with his wishes in every way. When we arrived at Bahji and entered the Shrine he requested me to give him his ring, which I was wearing concealed about my neck, and this he placed on the ring-finger of my right hand, the same finger that corresponded to the one of his own on which he himself had always worn it. This was the only gesture he made. He entered the inner Shrine, beneath the floor of which Bahá'u'lláh is interred, and gathered up in a handkerchief all the dried petals and flowers that the keeper of the Shrine used to take from the threshold and place in a silver receptacle at the feet of Bahá'u'lláh. After he had chanted the Tablet of Visitation we came back to Haifa. There was no celebration, no flowers, no elaborate ceremony, no wedding dress, no reception. His mother and father, in compliance with the laws of Bahá'u'lláh, signified their consent by signing our marriage certificates and then I went back to the Western Pilgrim House across the street and joined my parents (who had not been present at any of these events), and Shoghi Effendi went to attend to his own affairs. At dinner-time, quite as usual, the Guardian appeared, showering his love and congratulations on my mother and father. He took the handkerchief, full of such precious flowers, and with his inimitable smile gave them to my mother, saying he had brought them for her from

the inner Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. My parents also signed the marriage certificate and after dinner and these events were over I walked home with Shoghi Effendi, my suitcases having been taken across the street by Fujita while we were at dinner. We visited for awhile with the Guardian's family and then went up to his two rooms which the Greatest Holy Leaf had had built for him so long ago.

The quietness, the simplicity, the reserve and dignity with which this marriage took place did not signify that the Guardian considered it an unimportant event — on the contrary. Over his mother's signature, but drafted by the Guardian, the following cable was sent to America: "Announce Assemblies celebration marriage beloved Guardian. Inestimable honour conferred upon handmaid of Bahá'u'lláh Ruhiyyih Khanum Miss Mary Maxwell. Union of East and West proclaimed by Bahá'í Faith cemented. Ziaiyyih mother of the Guardian." A telegram similar to this was sent to Persia. This news, so long awaited, naturally produced great rejoicing amongst the Bahá'ís and messages flooded in to Shoghi Effendi from all parts of the world. To that received from the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada Shoghi Effendi replied: "Deeply moved your message. Institution Guardianship, head cornerstone Administrative Order Cause Bahá'u'lláh, already ennobled through its organic connection with Persons of Twin Founders Bahá'í Faith, is now further reinforced through direct association with West and particularly with American believers, whose spiritual destiny is to usher in World Order Bahá'u'lláh. For my part desire congratulate community American believers on acquisition tie vitally binding them to so weighty an organ of their Faith." To innumerable other messages his practically universal answer was merely an expression of loving appreciation for their felicitations.

The most significant point, however, associated with the Guardian's marriage is the stress he laid on the fact that it had drawn the Occident and the Orient closer to each other. It had not only done this but other ties had also been reinforced and established. In reply to an inquiry from the

> American Assembly: "Request advice policy concerning announcement marriage" Shoghi Effendi stated: "Approve public announcement. Emphasize significance institution Guardianship union East West and linking destinies Persia America. Allude honour conferred British peoples" — a direct allusion to my Scotch Canadian father.
>
> All this had such an effect on the American Community that its national body informed the Guardian it was sending $19.00 from each one of its seventy-one American Assemblies "for immediate strengthening new tie binding American Bahá'ís to institution Guardianship" — truly a most unusual, pure-hearted wedding gift to the Cause itself.

Mary Sutherland Maxwell was born on August 8, 1910, to William Sutherland Maxwell (the architect who would design the Shrine of the Bab and be named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Ellis Bolles Maxwell . Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

> Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.

It was at this home that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his talk discussing his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America .

During her youth she twice traveled to Palestine for pilgrimage , the first time with her mother at age twelve and the second time with her mother's friends at age sixteen. It was during these pilgrimages that she first met Shoghi Effendi.

As a young woman, Mary had expressed a great desire to learn Spanish. However, her plans to travel to Republican Spain were thwarted with the Spanish Civil War. Instead, Mary chose to live with her cousin in Nazi Germany in 1935, a move which was endorsed by Shoghi Effendi. In Germany, Shoghi Effendi encouraged Mary to

strengthen the fledgling Bahá'í community. The young Mary assimilated herself in German culture, wearing a dirndl and learning to speak German fluently. Whilst in Germany, Mary received an invitation from Shoghi Effendi to make a pilgrimage with her mother. Mother and daughter accepted the invitation.

Arriving in Haifa in January 1937 with her mother, she and Shoghi Effendi began a brief courtship. In February the couple were engaged, and Mary cabled her father to come as soon as he could to Haifa. On March 24 at the age of 26, Mary married Shoghi Effendi. The newlyweds made a trip to Switzerland and Shoghi Effendi introduced his young bride to his favorite sights in the country to which he would often travel. It was only a year after his wedding that Shoghi Effendi in 1938 praised Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria .

In 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed her to the International Bahá'í Council and in 1952 a Hand of the Cause of God , as a replacement for her father who had died shortly before her appointment. She accompanied Shoghi Effendi during his various visits with the leadership of the newly-established State of Israel.

After Shoghi Effendi's death, for the remainder of her life, she traveled extensively and gave numerous talks. From 1969 through 1973, she undertook a Great African Safari . Around 1981, she spoke to the Persian Bahá'í community in Los Angeles "upbraiding them for settling in a such a decadent urban center, implying they should never have left Iran, and that if they had insisted on doing so should at least have had the decency to settle as missionaries in some remote village of the global South...When someone from the audience asked where they should have settled instead, she replied in Persian that it was self-evident: *"Khar kih nistid"* ("you are not asses").

She died on January 19, 2000, at the age of 89 in Haifa, Israel where she is buried at the Bahá'í World Centre .

In 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed her to the International Bahá'í Council and in 1952 a Hand of the Cause of God , as a replacement for her father who had died shortly before her appointment. She accompanied Shoghi Effendi during his various visits with the leadership of the newly-established State of Israel.

After Shoghi Effendi's death, for the remainder of her life, she traveled extensively and gave numerous talks. From 1969 through 1973, she undertook a Great African Safari . Around 1981, she spoke to the Persian Bahá'í community in Los Angeles "upbraiding them for settling in a such a decadent urban center, implying they should never have left Iran, and that if they had insisted on doing so should at least have had the decency to settle as missionaries in some remote village of the global South...When someone from the audience asked where they should have settled instead, she replied in Persian that it was self-evident: *"Khar kih nistid"* ("you are not asses")."

She died on January 19, 2000, at the age of 89 in Haifa, Israel where she is buried at the Bahá'í World Centre .

Comments

No comments.

March 24. On this date in 1892, Stanley Bolton was born in Ontario, Canada. He established the first Australian Bahá'í Summer School in Yerrinbool and served on the NSA of Australia and New Zealand from 1937 to 1958, occasionally as Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

Published on: March 20, 2026

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Stanley Bolton was born in North Adelaide Township, Canada in on March 24, 1892 and attended Crathie School there. In 1905 his family moved to Strathroy, Ontario and Stanley attended Strathroy Collegiate. At the start of WW1 Stanley was conscripted into the Canadian Armed Forces. He enlisted on December 24, 1917 in Calgary, and was wounded in France. He found employment with the Fuller Brush Company in Winnipeg, Manitoba after the war.

He met Mariette Germain Roy in 1922 and they were married in 1923. The couple moved to Australia in 1924, arriving in Sydney on September 24. Stanley was still employed by the Fuller Brush Company and worked to establish the company in Australia, travelling across several states in the process.

The Bolton's first heard of the Bahá'í Faith when they met Hyde and Clara Dunn in 1925, but they did not become Bahá'ís until they met Keith Ransom-Kehler when she visited Australia in 1931. Shoghi Effendi acknowledged their declarations personally in a letter written on his behalf:

> In closing may I ask you to extend to all our Sydney Bahá'ís & especially to Mrs. & Mr. Bolton, who have newly embraced the Cause, the loving

> greetings of the Guardian. In his moments of meditation and prayer he will remember them all and ask the Almighty to bless their unceasing efforts for the greater spread of His Message.

The Fuller Brush Company closed down in 1929 due to Australian import restrictions and the Bolton's moved to the United States in 1931, settling in Detroit where they assisted the local Bahá'í community. Shoghi Effendi approved of this move, having the following written to Mariette on his behalf:

> The Guardian wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated October 19. He was glad to hear that you have decided to settle for a while in Detroit and lend your valuable assistance to the Bahá'ís there. He is certain that you will help them to spread the Faith and to prepare the people to receive the Message. Shoghi Effendi deeply appreciates the eminent share that you and your husband are having in the services of the Cause; he has a profound and great confidence in your laborious endeavour, and values your assistance to the important task that he has been charged to fulfil by the Master.

In 1933 Bolton's son Stanley Jr. was diagnosed with poliomyelitis and was unable to walk and required around the clock medical care. Bolton had been treated by a chiropractor for kidney stones while living in Canada and decided to seek Chiropractic treatment for his son. He contacted the Palmer College of Chiropractic who directed him to a chiropractor in Ontario. Stanley Jr.'s symptoms abated after chiropractic treatment and the Bolton's moved to Davenport so Stanley and Mariette could attend Palmer College. They both became qualified chiropractors, and established a practice in Sydney when they returned to Australia in 1934.

In 1936 the Bolton's bought three acres of land in Yerrinbool to be used to host Bahá'í Summer Schools. Hyde Dunn laid the cornerstone of the first building on the site on the 11th of October 1936. Siegfried Schopflocher visited the property shortly after the first building was completed and suggested that it be named Bolton Place. The property was officially opened at a ceremony chaired by Stanley during the second Australian and New Zealand National Convention on May 2nd, 1937. The Bolton's did

not live on the property, but Stanley or Mariette traveled from Sydney to Yerrinbool every Wednesday from 1940 to 1943.

The first Australian Bahá'í Summer School was held on the property from the 8th to the 23rd of January 1938, and has been held there every year since. Stanley served as Chairman of the Summer School and both he and his wife delivered talks during sessions.Stanley and Mariette personally managed all of the affairs of the Summer School until 1945 when they transferred the responsibilities of management to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand.

Stanley continued to serve as Secretary of the Summer School after the transfer, and he and Mariette were as caretakers of the property until they left Yerrinbool, moving to Orange, in 1963. In 1949 the Bolton's began proceedings to legally transfer ownership of the Yerrinbool property to the National Spiritual Assembly, which were completed in March 1963.

In May 1939 Stanley and Mariette visited New Zealand while Martha Root was in the country. Martha Root was suffering from breast cancer and the Bolton's accompanied her on her trip from New Zealand to Honolulu, caring for her on the journey.

In August 1943 the Bolton's moved to Yerrinbool, and began hosting Summer School attendees in their home. They served as inaugural members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yerrinbool when it was established in 1948. In 1947 the Bolton's invited Frank Khan , a prominent member of the Australian Muslim community, to give a talk on Islam at the Summer School. Frank's family became the first Australian Muslims to become Bahá'í's in December 1948. Frank Khan would serve on the NSA of Australia, as would his children Joy Vohradsky and Peter Khan , who also served on the International Teaching Centre and Universal House of Justice . In 2000, Peter Khan gave a talk to New Zealand Bahá'ís about their reaction to Alison Marshall's excommunication, partially annotated here , which received a rebuttal by Juan Cole .

In 1951 Stanley represented the Faith at a United Nations conference held in Indonesia. From October 21 to December 5 of the same year he undertook a teaching tour of Australia visiting Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Public meetings were held during this tour, at which video of the Gardens in Haifa were shown before Stanley delivered a talk about the Faith. Stanley also gave a seven

minute talk on Ballarat radio, a twelve minute talk on Adelaide radio and spoke at the Australian Church in Melbourne during the tour.

In 1953 he attended the Asian Intercontinental Teaching Conference in New Delhi and delivered a talk. Stanley and Mariette also attended the European Intercontinental Teaching Conference in Stockholm, they visited Davenport while travelling to Stockholm and visited Hugh Chance, who they had first met in Australia in 1945, and discussed the Faith with him. The meeting piqued Chance's interest and he and his wife became Bahá'ís in January 1955. Stanley also attended the dedication of the Wilmette Temple and went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1953. He was given a fez that belonged to 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi while on pilgrimage.

In 1956 he undertook a teaching tour of New Zealand, visiting the North and South Islands and travelling approximately 3800 miles. During his tour of the North Island he drove from Whangarei to Wellington with Hugh Blundell. They drove throughout the day and held meetings when they arrived at a destination at night. Thirty-two meetings were held which were attended by seven hundred people in total. Bolton used public transport during his tour of the South Island. The following year an independent National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand was established, and Stanley chaired the Australian National Convention, as the Chairman of the Australian National Spiritual Assembly, Collis Featherstone, attended the first New Zealand National Convention.

Stanley died in 1966, and the Australian Bahá'ís held a Memorial service on May 8th. The Universal House of Justice sent the following cable after his death:

> DEEPLY GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED BELIEVER STANLEY BOLTON LONG OUTSTANDING SERVICES UPBUILDING FAITH AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND FROM EARLY DAYS UNFORGETTABLE ADVISE HOLDING MEMORIAL GATHERING TEMPLE STOP PLEASE CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY MRS BOLTON FAMILY ASSURE PRAYERS SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL

Comments

No comments.

March 24. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís "Fresh, ominous rumblings demonstrate the inevitability and foreshadow the approach of the final eruption involving the dissolution of a lamentably defective international order... Responsibility solemn, pressing, unavoidable."

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> APPROACH OF FINAL ERUPTION Fresh, ominous rumblings demonstrate the inevitability and foreshadow the approach of the final eruption involving the dissolution of a lamentably defective international order. The privileged community of American believers forewarned, undismayed, spiritually equipped. Notwithstanding the gravity of the times, they will pursue unswervingly the divinely-chartered course, their attention undistracted, their objective unobscured, their resolve unimpaired, their support undiminished, their loyalty unsullied. The immediate obligation is to complete settlement of Delaware, Utah, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia before termination of Bahá'í administrative year. Responsibility solemn, pressing, unavoidable.
>
> *Cablegram March 24, 1939*

Comments

No comments.

March 24. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question concerning the descent of Bahá'u'lláh from Abraham: The Master has stated that Bahá'u'lláh is a descendant of Abraham through a son of his, other than Isaac and Ishmael, from his wife Katurah...."

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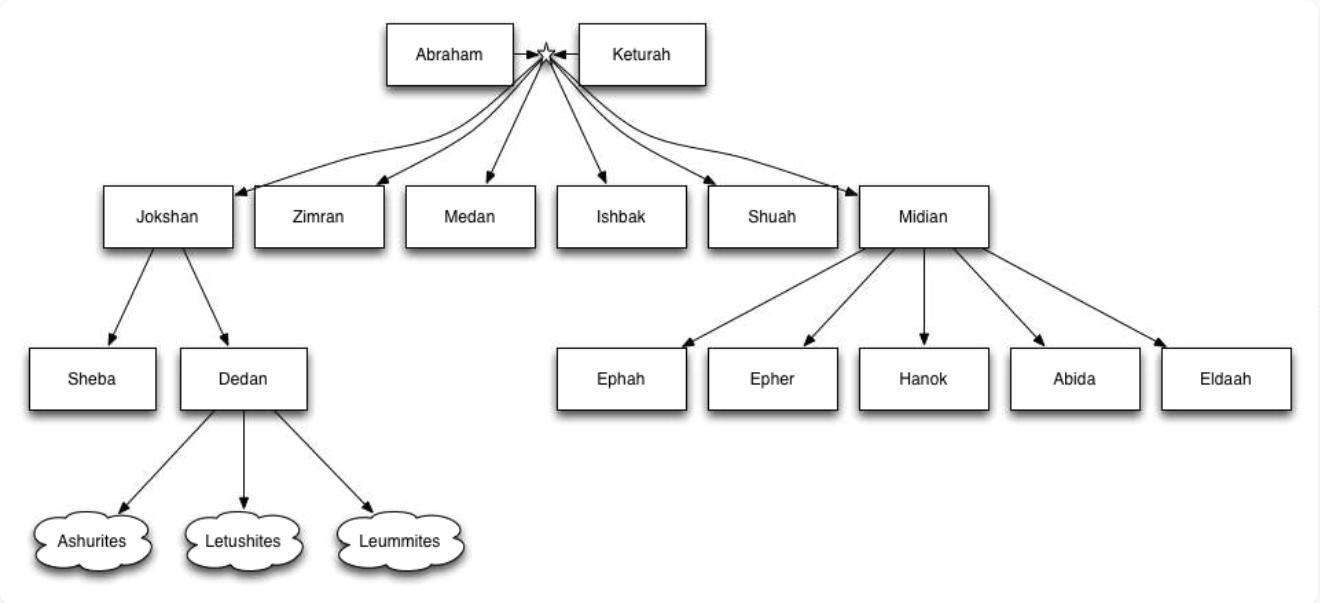
> 1559. Bahá'u'lláh Was a Descendent of Abraham Through Both Katurah and Sarah--Jesse, Son of Sarah, Was the Father of David and Ancestor of Bahá'u'lláh
>
> "Regarding your question concerning the Jesse from whom Bahá'u'lláh is descended: The Master says in 'Some Answered Questions', referring to Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 to 10, that these verses apply 'Word for word to Bahá'u'lláh'. He then identifies this Jesse as the father of David in the following words: '...for Joseph was of the descendants of Jesse the father of David...', thus identifying the Jesse of Isaiah, chapter 11, with being the father of David. Bahá'u'lláh is thus the descendant of Jesse, the father of David.
>
> "The Guardian hopes that this will clarify the matter for you. It is a tremendous and fascinating theme, Bahá'u'lláh's connection with the Faith of Judaism, and one which possesses great interest to Jew and Christian alike."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer,

July 11, 1942)

"Regarding your question concerning the descent of Bahá'u'lláh from Abraham: The Master has stated that Bahá'u'lláh is a descendant of Abraham through a son of his, other than Isaac and Ishmael, from his wife Katurah ...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 24, 1943)



Comments

No comments.

March 24. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "to have the book of Dr. Esslemont's translated into as many different languages as possible...translated and published into a dozen languages and others are forthcoming...Dr. Esslemont's book is in many respects the best available."

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March 24. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote Siyyid Mustafá Rúmí "to have the book of Dr. Esslemont 's translated into as many different languages as possible. He already has had it translated and published into a dozen languages and others are forthcoming... Dr. Esslemont's book is in many respects the best available. It is comprehensive in its scope and also clear and simple in its rendering. It has also been corrected partly by our beloved Master."

> [To Siyyid Mustafá Rúmí]
>
> March 24, 1932
>
> Dear Bahá'í Brother,
>
> One of the interests of Shoghi Effendi at present is to have the book of Dr. Esslemont 's translated into as many different languages as possible. He already has had it translated and published into a dozen languages and others are forthcoming.
>
> This deep interest is primarily due to the fact that the teachers are in many countries hampered in their work by the lack of proper literature to be handed to an earnest seeker. Neither they have the time nor the beginner has the patience for long discourses on the tenets of the Faith and there is in many countries no book to fill that gap.
>
> Dr. Esslemont's book is in many respects the best available. It is comprehensive in its scope and also clear and simple in its rendering. It has

> also been corrected partly by our beloved Master.
>
> In short, Shoghi Effendi would be very thankful if you should arrange for its translation into the Burmese language. It should, however, be done by a person who is well versed in that language and also is thoroughly conversant with English. He also promises to send a contribution when it is ready for publication as he has been doing in the case of the other translations.
>
> He believes very fervently that when that book will be out from the press the teaching work will be stimulated and the task of the teachers infinitely facilitated.
>
> In close may I express his loving greetings and best wishes and also his many thanks in advance for this work which he is sure you will take up immediately and with all your fervour and love.

John Esslemont was a prominent British Bahá'í from Scotland who authored the well-known introductory book on the Bahá'í Faith, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, which is still in circulation. He was named posthumously by Shoghi Effendi as the first Hand of the Cause he appointed, and as one of the Disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Born on May 19, 1874, John Esslemont appears repeatedly at key points in Bahá'í history. For example, at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

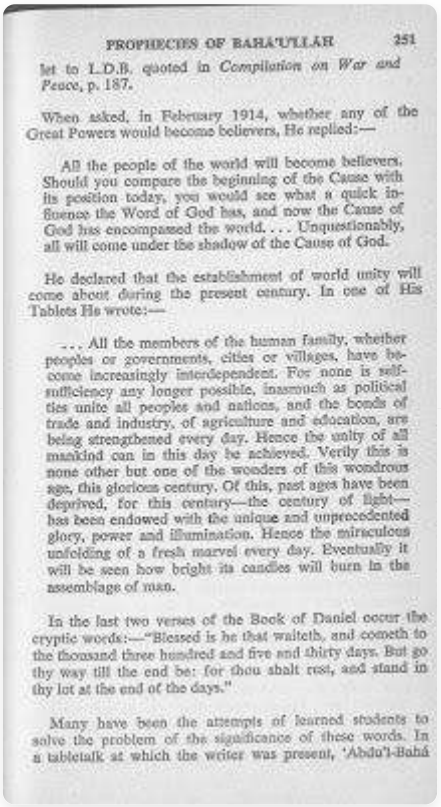
John Esslemont 's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Other significant edits include...

Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent

that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

John Esslemont died in Haifa on November 22, 1925.



PROPHECIES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH 251

let to L.D.B. quoted in *Compilation on War and Peace*, p. 187.

When asked, in February 1914, whether any of the Great Powers would become believers, He replied:—

All the people of the world will become believers. Should you compare the beginning of the Cause with its position today, you would see what a quick influence the Word of God has, and now the Cause of God has encompassed the world. . . . Unquestionably, all will come under the shadow of the Cause of God.

He declared that the establishment of world unity will come about during the present century. In one of His Tablets He wrote:—

. . . All the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this, past ages have been deprived, for this century—the century of light—has been endowed with the unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man.

In the last two verses of the Book of Daniel occur the cryptic words:—"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Many have been the attempts of learned students to solve the problem of the significance of these words. In a tabletalk at which the writer was present, 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Comments

No comments.

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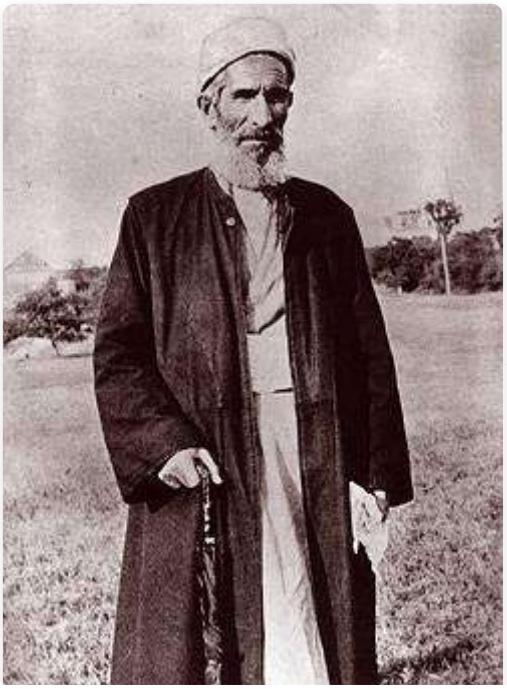
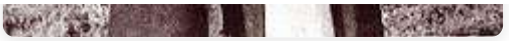
> He was very interested in your notes concerning Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl 's teachings on Zoroaster and the information on the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh's family and the ancient kings of Persia. In the past some of the friends were under the misapprehension that Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl taught that Abraham and Zoroaster were the same person.
>
> (24 March 1943)





Comments

No comments.

March 25. On this date in 1957, George Townshend died. A former Irish Anglican clergyman and Hand of the Cause of God, Townshend's "Christ and Bahá'u'lláh" is notable for the changes made from the original publication to subsequent editions published after Shoghi Effendi's death.

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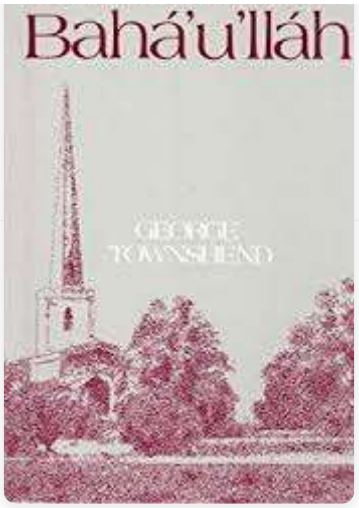
George Townshend was born on June 14, 1876.

On June 10, 1919, George Townshend wrote his first letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and received a reply six weeks later. He became a Bahá'í a few months later, but only in 1947, at the age of 70, did Townshend renounce his orders to the Anglican Church.

Shoghi Effendi designated him a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951 and once said of George Townshend that he feels "Mr. Townshend's services to the Faith can best be rendered by his writing about it, as he obviously has an outstanding ability in this direction..."

Of the books that Townshend wrote, *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh* is notable for the changes made from the original publication to subsequent editions published after Shoghi Effendi's death. For example, a statement about the **"first and present Guardian"** has been removed and **a section discussing "the lineage of succeeding Guardians"** has been replaced with a section discussing "divinely guided institutions" in general.

On March 25, 1957, George Townshend died secondary to Parkinson's disease.



Comments

No comments.

March 25. On this date in 1998, Hugh Chance, who served on the Universal House of Justice for 30 years from its inaugural election in 1963 until his retirement from that body in 1993, died.

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Comments

No comments.

March 25. On this date in 1887, Elizabeth Stamp was born in Bagenalstown, Ireland. She became a Bahá'í in 1939 in New York and on May 4, 1954, was named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh when she arrived in St. Helena.

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Elizabeth Stamp was born in Bagenalstown in Ireland on March 25, 1887 and was educated in Dublin. She emigrated to the United States becoming a US citizen and residing in New York City where she became a Bahá'í in 1939. She made travel teaching trips across the South and Midwest US while living in New York. Her husband passed while she was in New York.

In July 1953 at the opening of the Ten Year Crusade Elizabeth offered to pioneer to South Africa where her sister lived, however she ultimately decided to instead ask permission to pioneer to St. Helena, a virgin territory in the South Atlantic. She arrived there on May 4, 1954, and was named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh. The island was isolated at this time, with monthly ship arrivals being the only contact with the outside world, and Elizabeth asked for the thoughts and prayers of the Bahá'í community to support her. The Bishop of the Church of England on the island was initially unhappy with her presence but she eventually earned his respect and presented him with some Bahá'í literature. The strong position of the Church of England on the island meant she made little progress with teaching the Faith, however by 1964 four locals had converted to the Faith. She visited Elizabeth Hopper in Madeira while living on St. Helena.

In April 1963 Elizabeth was injured in a fall and went to South Africa to recover residing there until returning to St. Helena in December 1963, however she had to

move to South Africa at the close of 1964 due to circumstances in St. Helena. She served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Durban while in South Africa.

Elizabeth Stamp returned to the United States in June 1966 settling in Waterbury, Connecticut, where she died on November 11, 1970, and was buried next to her husband.

Comments

No comments.

March 25. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Efforts unremitting, systematic, and continent-wide in their scope, can alone garner a harvest worthy of the high confidence placed in them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. May they prove themselves increasingly worthy of so high a privilege, so glorious a task

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March 25. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The exploits immortalizing the first stage of the Divine Plan , however glorious their record, have yet to yield their noblest fruits. Efforts unremitting, systematic, and continent-wide in their scope, can alone garner a harvest worthy of the high confidence placed in them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. May they prove themselves increasingly worthy of so high a privilege, so glorious a task."

MOMENTOUS RESPONSIBILITIES

> The assistance extended by the American Bahá'í Community to the long-suffering German believers is a further evidence of their readiness, so abundantly demonstrated in the past, to champion the interests, and to rehabilitate the institutions of their sister communities throughout the Bahá'í world. This support, so generously extended, so consistently and faithfully offered by the rank and file of the American believers, and particularly by their elected National representatives, is but a subsidiary aspect of the tremendous undertakings which, in both the North and South American continents, the standard bearers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have initiated and developed, for the promotion of its interests, during the concluding decades of the first Bahá'í century.
>
> The twofold task which they have so nobly undertaken--the proclamation of the Faith in the North American continent and the consolidation of its nascent institutions in Latin America--must, whatever plan is devised in

the coming years for the furtherance of their world-wide mission--be relentlessly prosecuted. That further responsibilities, of a momentous character, will have to be superimposed on the stalwart prosecutors of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan , as they gird up their loins to carry a stage further their historic labors in obedience to His wishes, no one can for a moment doubt. As the field of their activities, ranging over entire continents, grows in scope and in importance, the aims and purposes associated with the first stage of their glorious mission must, in no wise, be either neglected or forgotten. The steady multiplication of groups and of Spiritual Assemblies throughout the States of the great American Republic, the continual broadcasting of the Divine Message to the leaders of public opinion and the masses, as well as the establishment of the newly fledged local Assemblies throughout Latin America on an unassailable basis, and the dissemination of Bahá'í literature among its people, demand whatever the nature of the supplementary responsibilities that will have to be assumed in the years to come, the closest attention on the part of the entire body of the American believers, and must continue to be regarded as the fundamental issues facing their national representatives. The exploits immortalizing the first stage of the Divine Plan , however glorious their record, have yet to yield their noblest fruits. Efforts unremitting, systematic, and continent-wide in their scope, can alone garner a harvest worthy of the high confidence placed in them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. May they prove themselves increasingly worthy of so high a privilege, so glorious a task.

March 25, 1946

Comments

No comments.

March 25. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote "the Bahá'í youth will arise for the sake of God and, through their driving force, their ability to endure inhospitable and arduous...and will promote with distinction the vital interests of God's Cause at this crucial stage in the fortunes of the Plan.

Published on: March 23, 2026

March 25. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote "We sincerely hope that the forefront of the volunteers, the Bahá'í youth will arise for the sake of God and, through their driving force, their ability to endure inhospitable and arduous conditions, and their contentment with the bare necessities of life, they will offer an inspiring example to the peoples and communities they set out to serve, will exert an abiding influence on their personal lives, and will promote with distinction the vital interests of God's Cause at this crucial stage in the fortunes of the Plan ."

2138. Youth Will Arise for the Sake of God

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(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, March 25, 1975)

Comments

No comments.

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Published on: March 23, 2026

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> Portion of a Tablet to Mr. Roy O. Wilhelm :
>
> Convey my longing greeting to all the believers of God throughout all the cities of America and announce to them on my behalf that if any person from amongst the Persian believers who may be well known as to his character, whether man or woman-although he may be my own son or daughter - comes to America and has not a NEW permission for his going to America written with my own handwriting and signed with my own signature, you must not give him any attention at all. Whosoever speaks with him is a violator of the Covenant ! This question is most important. Undoubtedly you must show the utmost caution. There are some wolves in sheep's clothes who may claim to be shepherds. Whosoever from amongst the Persian believers arrives in America although he may be related to me, - that is, - even if he be my son-in-law or she be my daughter, first ask him the letter giving him a NEW permission to come again to America. If she shows you any such letter, be most careful and attentive that it is my

writing and my signature, that they may not be counterfeits. Then you cable to me and inquire about him. When the answer is received by you that it is correct, then you meet him, otherwise do not associate with him. Announce the contents of this letter to all the believers and the maid servants of the Merciful throughout America. (Signed) Abdul Baha Abbas.

Translated by M. Ahmad Sohrab , March 25, 1913, Paris, France.

The Original of this Tablet is in the Master's Own Handwriting.

On May 11, 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "The case of Ahmad Sohrab is, for one who has had any experience of orientals and of psychology, easily understandable."

11 May 1948

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Your communications, addressed to our beloved Guardian, and dated January 11th, February 14th, and March 31st, have been received, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

The progress the Faith is making in Germany is a source of great happiness to him, and the list you sent him, showing the large increase in the number of assemblies, groups and isolated Bahá'ís, greatly encouraged him, and he hastened to share this good news with the friends in other countries.

He was, likewise, very pleased to see that the Esslingen School is going to be so well attended, and that your assembly is so wisely making this spot a rallying point for Bahá'í Youth and their friends. Upon receipt of your letter he cabled Mr. Holley to send the food parcels you required for the Summer School, and he hopes that these reach you safely.

He is delighted over the signs of maturity which are becoming increasingly evident in the German Bahá'í Community. Not only is your membership steadily increasing and the number of your assemblies multiplying, but also the fact that most of the believers are realizing the need for breaking off their church membership and standing forth as members of an independent Faith; all these are welcome signs of progress and maturity.

And in view of this expansion in Bahá'í membership, and the consequent rapid increase in the number of Spiritual Assemblies, he feels that from now on you should increase the number of delegates, apportioned to the German and Austrian Bahá'í Community, from 19 to 38, (which is of course, twice nineteen.) This will ensure a fairer representation of the numerical strength of the Bahá'ís at their annual Convention, and enable the assemblies having a large community to receive more proportioned representation.

The Cause of God must be protected from the enemies of the Faith, and from those who sow seeds of doubt in the hearts of the believers, and the greatest of all protections is knowledge: there is no doubt that the silliest of all charges ever made is that the "Will and Testament" of the Master is a forgery! It is all in His own hand, sealed in more than one place with His own seal, and was opened after His death by some members of His own family, who took it from His own safe, in this house, and from that day it has been kept in the safe under lock and key. ** The charges of Mrs. White) were the result of an unbalanced mind.** No other enemy, even those who were shrewd and clever, made this foolish accusation! **The case of Ahmad Sohrab is, for one who has had any experience of orientals and of psychology, easily understandable.** He was, for some years the secretary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and enjoyed, as a result of this and the fact that he accompanied Him to America, (to be sure with a number of other Persians), a great deal of attention from the Bahá'ís who looked up to him and admired him. However, since the Master's Will was read, and the administrative order, under the Guardianship &oldid=745828715), began to be developed, he became cognizant of the fact that his personal ambition for leadership would have to be subordinated to some degree of supervision; that he would have to obey the National and local assemblies--just like every other Bahá'í, and could not be free to teach wholly independent of any advice or supervision. This was the beginning of the defection which in the end took him outside the pale of the Faith: he refused not to be handled always as an exception, a privileged exception. In

fact, if we keenly analyse it, it is almost invariably the soaring ambition and deep self-love of people that has led them to leave the Faith. Towards the end Sohrab used, in the course of his lectures, to incorporate quotation after quotation of Bahá'u'lláh's words in his lectures, without once stating they were Bahá'u'lláh's, and when the believers remonstrated with him over this plagiarism, it had no effect. After he had, of his own accord, left the organized body of the Faith and refused to be reconciled with it, he began to attack the administrators of it, first the American N.S.A., then the entire administrative order, and in the end the Guardian. What he teaches at present is so far divorced from our beloved Faith, and so tinged with the doctrines of many "cults" which we see thriving at present, as to be almost unrecognizable. Sohrab 's influence and activities in America have waned greatly, and he seems to now feel his only chance of causing mischief is to be active with his "caravan" movement abroad. The books and articles he published attacking the Guardian and, in fact, everything established in the Master's Will , had no effect, and far from succeeding in causing any breach in the Faith in America, some of the very few who followed him out of the Cause, gave him up, and returned to serve the Cause with redoubled enthusiasm!

The Guardian feels that one of the best antidotes to those -- Sohrab or others--who seek to undermine the faith of the believers, especially by harping on the subject of excommunication, is to place in their hands a German edition of "God Passes By" . For in that book he (the Guardian) has clearly pointed out that the Cause of God has always been attacked from within, and that, beginning in the days of the Báb, the "Sea of Truth" has over and over cast out its spiritually dead. It must do this, even as the body seeks to rid itself of poisons so as to preserve the health of the entire organism.

Your assembly should do all it can to protect and educate the believers so that they will understand that it is not personal ill-will, or lack of love, which leads to the excommunication of a person, but rather the fact that he has become like a cancer which must be removed before the entire body is

destroyed.

He is very anxious to have the work on the National Headquarters in Frankfurt a.M. reported to him, and to receive pictures of the building purchased, for publication in "Bahá'í World".

The way the work your Assembly is doing is progressing, pleases him greatly, and he assures you all of his loving prayers on your behalf, for your protection and your success....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-workers:

The marvellous progress achieved in recent months by the virile, steadfast and dearly beloved German Bahá'í community has rejoiced my heart, and deepened the admiration of the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in every land, for the qualities of mind and heart that distinguish the adherents of this Cause in your country.

The marvellous increase in the number of newly-enrolled believers, the multiplication of groups and assemblies throughout the length and breadth of your land, the purchase and projected restoration of the national & Haziratu'l-Quds in the city of Frankfurt, the impetus lent to the translation and publication of Bahá'í Literature, the receptivity shown by your country-men to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the consolidation of the various agencies of a steadily expanding Administrative Order in the various zones of your country--all these augur well for the complete fulfilment of `Abdu'l-Bahá's glorious prophecies regarding its future.

The doubling of the number of delegates to the next Bahá'í national convention will eloquently testify to this remarkable growth and rapid consolidation of the community you are privileged to serve and direct. The interests of the Austrian Bahá'í community should, while the work is steadily progressing in Germany, be vigilantly and determinedly promoted. Through guidance, assistance, encouragement, frequent visits when ever possible, the community of the believers in Austria should be nursed and

prepared to discharge befittingly its sacred responsibilities, until such time, as has been the case with Canada, as it can elect its own national assembly and assume independent existence within the world-wide Bahá'í community.

At this propitious moment in the evolution of the Faith in your country, at a time when the American, the British, the Indian, the Persian, the Australian, the Canadian and Iraqi national Bahá'í communities are busily engaged in prosecuting specially conceived Plans for the systematic propagation of the Faith within their respective countries and beyond their confines, it is only fitting for a community as old and honoured as yours, which has survived such cruel blows, which occupies so enviable a position in the heart of Europe, the recipient of so great a measure of bounty and loving-kindness from `Abdu'l-Bahá, to formulate its own Plan, preferably a five year Plan, destined to culminate in 1953, the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission in the Siyáh-Chál of Tihrán.

As to the objectives of the Plan, in both Germany and Austria, I feel that your assembly should carefully consider them, and after mature deliberation announce them to the believers and ensure, by every means in its power, the attainment of every goal you set yourselves to achieve.

The launching of such a Plan, after the consolidation of the institutions of the Faith, during the three years that have elapsed since the termination of the war, will constitute a landmark in the history of the Faith in that country, and will, no doubt act as a tremendous magnet, drawing the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh, and contributing, to an unprecedented degree, to the establishment of His Cause in the heart of Europe.

I long to hear the joyful tidings announcing the formulation and inauguration of such a Plan, which will greatly stimulate the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in East and West, and enrich the annals of His Faith during the opening decade of the second Bahá'í century.

May the Spirit of our beloved Master, watching from on high over the destinies of this highly promising, this richly endowed community, enable

it to usher in this new phase of internal development of His Father's Faith in that country, in a manner that will redound to the fame and glory of His German-speaking followers.

Shoghi

Comments

Sertorius126:

Incredible. Once again the Master and the Guardian proved the power of the Covenant and their superhuman wisdom and foresight above the then-present confusions of the friends.

May we all learn to follow Bahá'úlláh's Universal House of Justice with equal

> conviction!

March 25. On this date in 2007, the UHJ sent a letter about the Bahá'í Electoral Process referring to the responsibility of individual Bahá'ís in participating in Bahá'í elections and mentioning the permissibility of discussing qualifications of membership without reference to personality.

Published on: March 23, 2026

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25 March 2007

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

One of the signs of the breakdown of society in all parts of the world is the erosion of trust and collaboration between the individual and the institutions of governance. In many nations the electoral process has become discredited because of endemic corruption. Contributing to the widening distrust of so vital a process are the influence on the outcome from vested interests having access to lavish funds, the restrictions on freedom of choice inherent in the party system, and the distortion in public perception of the candidates by the bias expressed in the media. Apathy, alienation, and disillusionment are a consequence, too, as is a growing sense of despair of the unlikelihood that the most capable citizens will emerge to deal with the manifold problems of a defective social order. Evident everywhere is a yearning for institutions which will dispense justice, dispel oppression, and foster an enduring unity between the disparate elements of society.

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is the divinely ordained system for which nations and

peoples so desperately search. Hailed by the Báb in the Persian Bayan, its foundational features prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, this Order is without precedent in human history for its standard of justice and its commitment to the practical realization of the oneness of mankind, as well as for its capacity to promote change and the advancement of world civilization. It provides the means by which the Divine Will illumines the path of human progress and guides the eventual establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Throughout the entire planet the devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh are labouring to develop further the Bahá'í Administrative Order described by the Guardian "not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order", thus setting the foundation for a world civilization destined to yield its dazzling splendour in the centuries to come. They do so notwithstanding the conditions of turmoil and disorder alluded to by Bahá'u'lláh in affirming that "the world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed."

With the concerted worldwide endeavour to advance the process of entry by troops gathering momentum through implementation of the provisions of the Five Year Plan, it is now opportune that the believers everywhere give greater attention to strengthening the process by which Assemblies, national and local, are elected. The manner of participation by all adult members of the community in these elections is a distinguishing feature of the System of Bahá'u'lláh; for it is a bounden duty that confers a high privilege upon every Bahá'í to select, as a responsible citizen of the new world being brought into existence, the composition of the institutions having authority over the functioning of the Bahá'í community. In this regard, indifference and neglect on the part of any believer are alien to the spirit of the Cause. The friends must strive ceaselessly to avoid being contaminated with these destructive attitudes, which have inflicted such damage on the integrity and authority of the institutions of a declining world order.

In describing Bahá'í elections, Shoghi Effendi, through a letter written on his behalf, conveyed that "Bahá'í electoral procedures and methods have, indeed, for one of their

essential purposes the development in every believer of the spirit of responsibility. By emphasizing the necessity of maintaining his full freedom in the elections, they make it incumbent upon him to become an active and well-informed member of the Bahá'í community in which he lives."

The manner in which the elector exercises the right and privilege to cast his vote is therefore of great significance. Shoghi Effendi's instruction in this passage further explains that "to be able to make a wise choice at the election time, it is necessary for him to be in close and continued contact with all local activities, be they teaching, administrative or otherwise, and to fully and whole-heartedly participate in the affairs of the local as well as national committees and assemblies in his country. It is only in this way that a believer can develop a true social consciousness and acquire a true sense of responsibility in matters affecting the interests of the Cause. Bahá'í community life thus makes it a duty for every loyal and faithful believer to become an intelligent, well-informed and responsible elector, and also gives him the opportunity of raising himself to such a station."

While there should be no mention of personalities in connection with Bahá'í elections, it is quite appropriate for believers to discuss the requirements and qualifications for membership in the institution to be elected. Shoghi Effendi offers clear guidance on this point: "I feel that reference to personalities before the election would give rise to misunderstanding and differences. What the friends should do is to get thoroughly acquainted with one another, to exchange views, to mix freely and discuss among themselves the requirements and qualifications for such a membership without reference or application, however indirect, to particular individuals." Among the "necessary qualities" specified by the Guardian are those "of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience". With a heightened awareness of the functions to be performed by the elected body, the believer can properly assess those for whom a vote should be cast. From among the pool of those whom the elector believes to be qualified to serve, selection should be made with due consideration given to such other factors as age distribution, diversity, and gender. The elector should make his choice after careful thought over an extended period before the actual election.

When called upon to vote in a Bahá'í election, believers should be aware that they are carrying out a sacred task unique to this Dispensation. They should approach this duty in a prayerful attitude, seeking divine guidance and confirmation. As Shoghi Effendi has advised, "they must turn completely to God, and with a purity of motive, a freedom of spirit and a sanctity of heart, participate in the elections."

Through their wholehearted embrace of the Bahá'í electoral process, the believers will witness, day by day, a greater contrast between the emerging institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the decaying social order around them. In this increasing distinction will be seen the promise of the glory of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh—the System destined to fulfil the highest expectations of humanity.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

No comments.

March 25. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote all National Spiritual Assemblies regarding the codification of the Laws of Huqúqu'lláh.

Published on: March 23, 2026

March 25. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote all National Spiritual Assemblies regarding the codification of the Laws of Huqúqu'lláh .

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

25 March 1987

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

In furtherance of the goal of the Six Year Plan to educate the friends throughout the world in the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the Research Department has prepared a simple codification of the law. A copy of this codification is enclosed for you to share, as you judge appropriate, with the friends under your jurisdiction. It is based largely on a codification produced spontaneously by some friends in Austria and on another written under the auspices of the United States National Spiritual Assembly. References throughout the document are to the sections of the compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh which has already been sent to you.

To help the friends increase their understanding of the significance of this Law of God, the Research Department was also requested by the Universal House of Justice to prepare a brief history of the development of the Institution which has been associated with the Law since the early years of its operation. This is also enclosed and is based on an article in Persian written by the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. 'Alí Muḥammad Varqá, apart from the final section about Dr. Varqá himself, which has been added by the Research Department.

It is hoped that National Spiritual Assemblies will use this material as extensively as possible to educate the friends and deepen their understanding of this vital law of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

A Codification of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh

March 1987

Prepared by the Research Department at the request of the Universal House of Justice

I. Preamble

Ḥuqúqu'lláh (The Right of God) is a great law (7) and a sacred institution (72). Laid down in the Most Holy Book (Kitáb-i-Aqdas), it is one of the key instruments for constructing the foundation and supporting the structure of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. It has far-reaching ramifications that extend from promoting the welfare of the individual, to buttressing the authority and extending the activity of the Head of the Faith. In providing a regular and systematic source of revenue for the Central Institution of the Cause, Bahá'u'lláh has assured the means for the independence and decisive functioning of the World Center of His Faith.

By identifying this law as "The Right of God" Bahá'u'lláh has reemphasized the nature of the relationship between human beings and their Creator as a Covenant based on mutual assurances and obligations; and, by designating the Central Authority in the Cause, to which all must turn, as the recipient of this Right, He has created a direct and vital link between every individual believer and the Head of his Faith that is unique in the structure of His World Order. This law enables the friends to recognize the elevation of their economic activity to the level of divine acceptability, it is a means for the purification of their wealth and a magnet attracting divine blessings. The computation and the payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, within the general guidelines set forth, are exclusively a matter of conscience between the individual and God (8, 104); demanding or soliciting the Ḥuqúqu'lláh is prohibited (8, 9, 38, 71, 96, 104), only appeals, reminders and exhortations of a general nature, under the auspices of the institutions of the Faith, are permissible (38, 70, 99, 104, 107). That the observance

and enforcement of this law, so crucial to the material well-being of the emerging Bahá'í commonwealth, should thus have been left entirely to the faith and conscience of the individual, gives substance to and sheds light on what the beloved Master calls the spiritual solution to economic problems. Indeed, the implications of the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh for the realization of a number of the principles of the Faith, such as the elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty, and a more equitable distribution of resources, will increasingly become manifest as the friends assume in ever greater measure the responsibility for observing it.

The fundamentals of the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh are promulgated in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Further elaborations of its features are to be found in other Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, in Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and in letters from Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice, mostly in response to questions raised by the friends. All these major references have been compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice and separately published. A study of that compilation makes it clear that the application of the law has been progressive, and will continue to be so, as its ramifications and subsidiary rulings are elucidated.

The following is a preliminary attempt at codifying the information in the Writings on the subject of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. It should be emphasized, however, that the friends should not attempt to read into it an element of rigidity or total comprehensiveness. The questions put to Bahá'u'lláh, the Master and Shoghi Effendi were from friends residing in places and times with infinitely simpler economic systems and relationships than those which obtain today. What can be learned from them are clear guiding principles whose application to changing and more complex conditions must be considered. The subject will undoubtedly occupy the Universal House of Justice in evolving legislation, as necessary, for a long time to come. As the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age of our Faith unfolds before the eyes of an increasingly watchful humanity, the universal assumption of the obligation of Ḥuqúqu'lláh by the friends will be a clear sign of attaining to a new level of spiritual maturity by the community of the Greatest Name throughout the world.

II. A Bounty Granted by God

God, while being wholly independent of all created things, has in His bounty given us

this law (7, 10, 63), for the progress and promotion of the Cause depend on material means (1). Obedience to this law enables the believer to be firm and steadfast in the Covenant (63), provides a reward in every world of the worlds of God (7), and is a unique test of true faith (62).

The Ḥuqúqu'lláh is to be offered joyfully and without hesitation (2, 9, 32). When the Ḥuqúqu'lláh is offered in this spirit it will impart prosperity and protection to the friends, purify their worldly possessions (20, 31, 42, 46, 48, 100), and enable them and their offspring to benefit from the fruits of their endeavors (48).

III. Determining the Ḥuqúqu'lláh

Everything that a believer possesses, with the exception of certain specific items, is subject once and only once to the payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh.

A Exempt from assessment to Ḥuqúqu'lláh are:

1 The residence and its needful furnishings (11).

2 The needful business and agricultural equipment which produce income for one's subsistence (12, 67, 68).

B Payment falls due:

1 Ḥuqúqu'lláh is payable as soon as a person's assessable possessions reach or exceed the value of 19 mithqáls of gold (18, 19, 30). [19 mithqáls equals approximately 2.2 troy ounces, or approximately 69.2 grams (87, 105, 110). At the present time—March 1987—this is equivalent to some US$914.]

a The amount to be paid is 19% of the value of the assessable property (10, 14).

b The payment is due on whole units of 19 mithqáls of gold (15).

2 Ḥuqúqu'lláh is payable on further units of 19 mithqáls of gold when subsequently acquired possessions, after the deduction of the annual expenses, raise the value of the assessable property sufficiently. Among the expenses to be deducted are:

a The general expenses of living (65, 66, 69, 78).

b Losses and expenses incurred on the sale of possessions (103).

c Sums which are paid to the State, such as taxes and duties (78).

3 When a person receives a gift or bequest it is to be added to his possessions and augments the total value in the same way as does an excess of annual income over expenditure (111).

4 If a property increases in value, Ḥuqúqu'lláh is not payable on that increase until it is realized, e.g. on the sale of the property.

5 If possessions decrease, such as through the expenses of a year exceeding the income received, Ḥuqúqu'lláh falls due again only after the loss has been made good and the total value of one's assessable possessions is augmented (15–19, 30, 65–68, 78, 108, 111).

6 The payment of debts takes precedence over the payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh (22).

7 The payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is dependent on the person's financial ability to meet his obligations (24).

8 On the death of a believer, the completion of his payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh is accomplished in the following manner:

a The first charge on the estate is the expense of burial (22).

b Secondly, the debts of the deceased must be paid (13).

c The Ḥuqúqu'lláh still due on the property should then be paid. In establishing the value of the property on which Ḥuqúq has not already been paid, the following are among the deductions to be made:

expenses of burial (22),

debts of the deceased (13),

loss of value of the assets when realized (103) and

expenses incurred in realizing the assets (103).

C Further notes on determining Ḥuqúqu'lláh:

1 It is left to the discretion of the individual believer to decide what is "needful" for himself and his family (104–6, 112).

2 Although references are made to annual payments of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the time and method of payment are left to the discretion of the individual believer. There is,

therefore, no obligation to liquidate one's assets in haste in order to fulfill one's current obligations to Ḥuqúqu'lláh (103).

3 Husband and wife are free to decide whether they want to honor their Ḥuqúqu'lláh obligations jointly or individually (109, 110).

4 The account of Ḥuqúqu'lláh should be kept separate from other contributions, inasmuch as the disposition of the funds of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh is subject to decision by the Central Authority in the Cause to which all must turn, whereas the purposes of the contributions to other Funds may be determined by the donors themselves.

5 Payment of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh has priority over making contributions to other Funds of the Faith (78, 79, 97, 100), as well as over the cost of pilgrimage (31). It is, however, left to the discretion of the believer whether or not he treats his contributions to the Fund as an expense when arriving at the value of the annual accretion to his property for the purpose of calculating the Ḥuqúqu'lláh that he is due to pay (105).

IV. Applicability of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh

The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh can be enforced only gradually because the time must be ripe if the desired results are to be attained (84–86). Thus hitherto the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh has been applied only to the believers from Iran and other countries of the Middle East. The other believers have been encouraged to support their local and national funds in its place but, although the law is not yet binding on them, they are and have been free to offer the Ḥuqúqu'lláh if they wish to do so (82, 93, 102, 103, 109, 110).

V. Payment of Ḥuqúqu'lláh

The Ḥuqúqu'lláh is normally paid to the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, his Deputies, or their appointed Representatives (35, 58). These persons issue receipts and forward the funds to the World Center (56).

VI. Management of the Ḥuqúqu'lláh

Decisions on the necessary ordinances concerning Ḥuqúqu'lláh (81, 100), as well as on its disposition, lie within the sole jurisdiction of the Central Authority in the Cause. The Ḥuqúqu'lláh can be employed for charitable purposes (62, 65, 75), or for other purposes useful to the Cause of God (77, 78).

The Development of the Institution for the Ḥuqúqu'lláh

March 1987

Prepared by the Research Department at the request of the Universal House of Justice

In one of His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh refers to this Law as ranking in importance immediately after the two great obligations of recognition of God and steadfastness in His Cause, and yet the introduction and implementation of this Law are characterized by kindness, forgiveness, tolerance and magnanimity. Although it deals with the material things of this world, it is placed among those spiritual obligations resting on the individual soul, such as prayer and fasting, the fulfillment of which is a direct responsibility of each believer towards God, not subject to the sanctions or impositions of His institutions in this world. It is, indeed, a clear expression of the priorities with which Bahá'u'lláh views the duties of mankind. First comes the spiritual, and then the material—however important in practice the latter may be.

After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas had been revealed in response to the pleas of the friends, Bahá'u'lláh withheld it from publication for some time and even then, when a number of devoted Bahá'ís, having learned of the law, endeavored to offer the Ḥuqúqu'lláh, the payment was not accepted. The Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh show His acute consciousness of the way in which material wealth has been permitted to degrade religion in the past, and He preferred the Faith to sacrifice all material benefits rather than to soil to the slightest degree its dignity and purity. Herein is a lesson for all Bahá'í institutions for all time.

However, as the beloved Guardian explained, funds are the life-blood of the Cause. God Himself, as Bahá'u'lláh stated, has made achievement dependent on material means. Therefore, as the awareness of the friends grew, He permitted the Ḥuqúqu'lláh to be accepted, provided the donor made the offering willingly with joy and awareness.

To receive the Ḥuqúqu'lláh, Bahá'u'lláh brought into being one of the great Institutions of the Faith, the Trusteeship of Ḥuqúqu'lláh.

The first to be honored with appointment as Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh was Jináb-i-Sháh Muḥammad from Manshád, Yazd, who eventually received from the Blessed Beauty

the title of Amínu'l-Bayán (Trustee of the Bayán). Ḥájí Sháh Muḥammad had embraced the Faith in its early years and had the bounty of entering the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. The fire of love kindled in his heart made him impatient to offer his services to the Threshold of his Beloved, and this undertaking he followed until the last moment of his life, surrendering all material belongings in the path of service. Encompassed by hardship, danger and lack of means, this trusted servant of Bahá'u'lláh, in journey after journey, would carry the friends' donations of Ḥuqúqu'lláh and their petitions to the Sacred Threshold and, in return, bring them news and Tablets from the Blessed Perfection.

One of the most sacred tasks entrusted to Amínu'l-Bayán was to go to Iran to receive the Remains of the Báb from their custodian, the devoted and valiant Hand of the Cause of God Jináb-i-Ḥájí Ákhúnd, and to transfer them through innumerable dangers to a safe hiding place in the Mosque of the Imámzádih Zayd in Tehran, where they lay concealed until the time when, at the behest of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they were transferred to the Holy Land to be laid in their permanent resting place on the slopes of Mount Carmel.

The attention of Jináb-i-Sháh Muḥammad was drawn to the rare qualities of nobility and detachment of one of the believers, Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan Ardakání, who was also from Yazd. The bond of fellowship between them became so strong that they became the closest of companions. Jináb-i-Sháh Muḥammad chose Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan to be his assistant and confidant in his services as the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. They were among the first group of pilgrims who, after encountering grave hardships and difficulties, were able to visit Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká. On their return to Iran they decided to make numerous journeys together, and on one of these journeys, in 1881, they were attacked and caught during a Kurdish revolt, and Jináb-i-Ḥájí Sháh Muḥammad was seriously wounded. Bahá'u'lláh instructed that, following the passing of Jináb-i-Sháh Muḥammad, the office of Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh should be conferred upon his loyal assistant and companion, Jináb-i-Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan, who was subsequently entitled Amín (the Trusted One) or Jináb-i-Ḥájí Amín.

Jináb-i-Ḥájí Amín was a shining star who served the Cause for forty-seven years with eagerness and zeal, showing magnanimity, courage and incredible steadfastness.

During the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh he was imprisoned twice, by order of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh and his son, Kámrán Mírzá. In the course of his second imprisonment, in the prison of Qazvín, referred to as Sijn-i-Matín (the Mighty Prison) by Bahá'u'lláh in the opening verses of the Tablet of the World, he was together with the Hand of the Cause Ḥájí Ákhúnd. Here, Jináb-i-Amín suffered gravely, his legs in fetters and a chain around his neck. His jailers, in order to torment him, would add castor oil to his food. With manifest resignation and submission, he would neither complain nor refuse the food, eating as though nothing were amiss. He was a symbol of magnanimity and detachment. He had no worldly possessions, no home or shelter of his own. His habitation was in the hearts and souls of the Bahá'í friends who would receive and entertain him with warmth and love. Each one would impatiently await his arrival, to enjoy the sweet melody of his prayers and chanting of the Tablets, the glad-tidings and encouragement he would bring. Every day he would bid good-bye to one family to spend the night in another household, illumining another gathering with his presence. He was continually on the move, traveling to most Iranian cities and being the trusted adviser of many Bahá'í friends in their personal affairs.

Among the countless journeys that Ḥájí Amín made was one to Paris where he attained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. During his long life he witnessed the last eleven years of the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh, the twenty-nine years of the Ministry of the Center of the Covenant, and seven years of the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi. Towards the end of his life he became ill and frail and was confined to bed, living in the home of his friend and assistant, Ḥájí Ghulám Riḍá, who, at the express desire of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, had been appointed his successor as Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. Upon his passing in 1928, Ḥájí Amín was named by the beloved Guardian a Hand of the Cause of God.

The third Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, Jináb-i-Ghulám Riḍá, was entitled Amín-i-Amín (Trustee of the Trustee). This distinguished soul was born into the wealthy merchant class of Tehran and was brought up to enjoy the comfortable life associated with it. During his youth, the urge to discover spiritual realities led him to the study of comparative religion and, while engaged in his business, he ventured to search out and associate with followers and leaders of religion. Disappointed in what he found, he sought more information about the Bahá'í Faith, which had been introduced to

him by his secretary. This enquiry soon developed into a serious study of the sacred Tablets and Writings and his heart was illumined with the light of faith. After embracing the Cause, Jináb-i-Ḥájí Ghulám Riḍá engaged in Bahá'í activities and, at the age of 32, he gave up trade to devote himself fully and freely to the service of the Faith. He developed a special attachment to Jináb-i-Amín and became his constant assistant. In due course he received a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá urging him to emulate Jináb-i-Amín and appointing him as Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh. While ever mindful of the responsibilities of his new position, he took the utmost care of Jináb-i-Amín for the remainder of his life.

Jináb-i-Ghulám Riḍá held the rank of Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh for eleven years. His home became a center for the gatherings of the friends and for the administration of the affairs of the Faith. It was during his Trusteeship that initial steps were taken for the registration of Bahá'í properties and endowments in Iran, and he was assiduous in doing his utmost for their protection and preservation. In 1938 he fell ill and passed away.

The fourth Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, appointed to this position by the beloved Guardian, was Jináb-i-Valíyu'lláh Varqá, the third son of Varqá the martyr. He was born in Tabríz and, after the martyrdom of his father and brother, he was brought up from early childhood by his grandmother, a staunch, powerful and fanatical Muslim. She did her utmost, until his early youth, to sow the seeds of enmity to the Faith in his heart. When he was sixteen, his uncle, surnamed Akhu'sh-Shahíd (the Brother of the Martyr), managed to remove him from this agonizing atmosphere of prejudice and took him to his home in Míyándu'áb. There he introduced him to the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings, opening a new world to Jináb-i-Varqá. So afire did he become with love for the Faith that, without any preparations, he decided to go on pilgrimage in the company of a close friend. However, his Local Spiritual Assembly did not approve of this, and guided him, instead, to go to Tehran to join his elder brother Jináb-i-'Azízu'lláh Varqá.

After his schooling in Tehran, Jináb-i-Varqá's longing to make his pilgrimage was fulfilled, and he then attended the American University in Beirut, deepening his knowledge of the Bahá'í teachings under the guidance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his

summer vacations. During this time he made a journey to Iran at the behest of the Master, and later accompanied Him on His historic journey to Europe and America, as an interpreter. Upon the completion of this journey, he returned to Iran and rendered invaluable services on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tehran, in many Bahá'í administrative agencies, and ultimately on the National Spiritual Assembly. His loyal and dedicated service as Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh was to follow, occupying him for seventeen years, during which time the observance of the Law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh was spread throughout Iran, so that ever more of the friends fulfilled their obligations, offering large sums and many properties. In order to devote his full time to this sacred enterprise, Jináb-i-Varqá resigned from the work in which he was employed.

In 1951 Jináb-i-Valíyu'lláh Varqá was among the first contingent of eminent believers elevated by Shoghi Effendi to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God. This opened new opportunities for him to meet with the friends and cheer their hearts with news of the victories being achieved in the teaching work, especially during the Ten Year Crusade, which opened at Riḍván 1953. These memorable services culminated in the fulfillment of his long-cherished desire to visit the beloved Guardian.

On his return to Iran from pilgrimage, a previous ailment grew worse, and Jináb-i-Varqá was forced to go to Tübingen in Germany for hospital treatment and an operation. The treatment, alas, was unsuccessful, and in November 1955 his noble life drew to a close.

In the cable announcing the passing of Valíyu'lláh Varqá, Shoghi Effendi included the words: "His mantle as Trustee Ḥuqúq now falls on 'Alí Muḥammad, his son.... Newly appointed Trustee Ḥuqúq now elevated rank Hand Cause."

Just two years following the appointment of Jináb-i-'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá to this onerous task, he and his fellow Hands of the Cause of God were confronted with the heart-breaking and soul-stirring events associated with the passing of the beloved Guardian, and carried the entire Bahá'í world to the victorious conclusion of the Ten Year Crusade, bringing into being, at Riḍván 1963, the Universal House of Justice.

The following twenty-three years have seen storms of tribulation and persecution afflicting the Bahá'í community in Iran, causing immense problems to be wrestled

with in relation to the safeguarding and sale of properties donated for the Ḥuqúqu'lláh as well as a multitude of other historic tasks that have fallen to the lot of Jináb-i-Varqá in his capacity as a Hand of the Cause of God.

The successive teaching plans caused an outflow of pioneers from Iran to all corners of the world, requiring the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh to appoint Deputies and Representatives in many countries beyond the borders of Iran until, at this time, the Institution is represented in every continent of the earth. Not only do the friends from Middle Eastern countries continue to obey the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh in their adopted countries, but, increasingly, other friends have been moved to offer the Ḥuqúq.

A new stage, therefore, has now been opened in the development of this Institution, a stage that will for ever be associated with the opening of the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age of the Faith and the emergence of the Bahá'í community from obscurity into the arena of world affairs.

Comments

No comments.

March 25. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote all National Spiritual Assemblies regarding plan for collaboration in the field of traveling teaching.

Published on: March 23, 2026

March 25. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote all National Spiritual Assemblies regarding plan for collaboration in the field of traveling teaching.

The Universal House of Justice

25 March 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

As we approach the threshold of the second year of the Five Year Plan, it is evident that the need for traveling teachers as indicated in the message launching that Plan is acquiring greater urgency and importance.

During the past year steps have been taken to revise the functions, broaden the base and strengthen the work of the Continental Pioneer Committees and to bring them into much closer collaboration with the Continental Boards of Counselors. Already, with their assistance an army of pioneers has moved and is moving towards its objectives, and a general readiness has been evinced by the friends, particularly the youth, to serve as itinerant teachers.

The strenuous efforts being made to fill the pioneer goals by the midway point of the Plan must now be paralleled by well-considered and determined efforts to swell to a mighty river the stream of those friends who will travel to foreign lands to reinforce the efforts of those who are laboring so valiantly to expand and consolidate the widely scattered Bahá'í communities and to proclaim the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to every stratum of society.

At our request the International Teaching Centre has evolved a plan, which we have

warmly approved, comprising specific goals of international collaboration in the field of traveling teaching. This plan is now being sent to the Continental Boards of Counselors who will, in turn, present it to the National Spiritual Assemblies, whose task it will be to implement it. In consultation with the Counselors each National Spiritual Assembly is to work out specific proposals which it should then present to the other National Assemblies with whom it is to collaborate, so that, as soon as possible, actual projects can be worked out and set in motion, thus inaugurating a process which should rapidly gather momentum and be prosecuted with undiminished vigor in the years ahead.

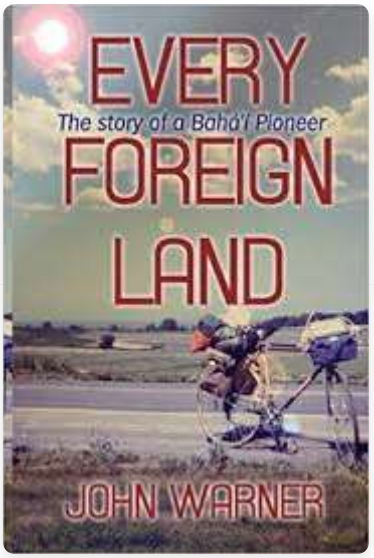
The Continental Pioneer Committees should be kept closely informed of all projects so that they may know how best to reinforce the flow with those many volunteers who will undoubtedly arise outside the framework of the specific projects now to be conceived. It is our hope that, as far as possible, travel teaching projects will be self-supporting or can be assisted by the National Funds involved, but where necessary, the International Deputization Fund is available to assist. Whenever assistance from the Deputization Fund is required, the request should be made to the Continental Pioneer Committee, giving details of the project. If the sum required is small the Committee may be able to help immediately; otherwise it will pass the request, together with its recommendation, to the Universal House of Justice for consideration.

We sincerely hope that in the forefront of the volunteers, the Bahá'í youth will arise for the sake of God and, through their driving force, their ability to endure inhospitable and arduous conditions, and their contentment with the bare necessities of life, they will offer an inspiring example to the peoples and communities they set out to serve, will exert an abiding influence on their personal lives, and will promote with distinction the vital interests of God's Cause at this crucial stage in the fortunes of the Plan.

We shall offer our ardent prayers at the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of the efforts of all those who will heroically respond to this call.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Northeastern States which is the 1st part of his Tablets of the Divine Plan.

Published on: March 25, 2026

March 26. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Northeastern States*, which is the 1st part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room at the mansion of Bahjí, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of nine Northeastern States of the United States: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

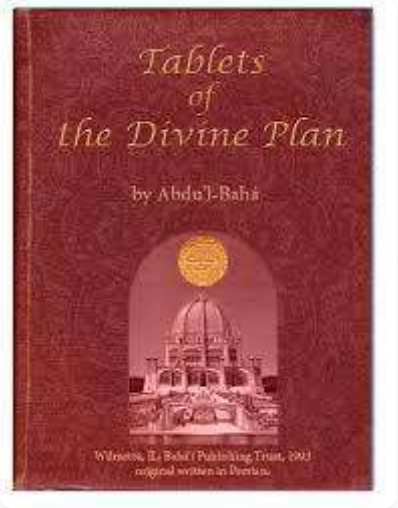
> O ye heavenly heralds:
>
> THESE are the days of Naw-Rúz. I am always thinking of those kind friends! I beg for each and all of you confirmations and assistance from the threshold of oneness, so that those gatherings may become ignited like unto candles, in the republics of America, enkindling the light of the love of God in the hearts; thus the rays of the heavenly teachings may begem and brighten the states of America like the infinitude of immensity with the stars of the Most Great Guidance.

The Northeastern States on the shores of the Atlantic— **Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York** —in some of these states believers are found, but in some of the cities of these states up to this date people are not yet illumined with the lights of the Kingdom and are not aware of the heavenly teachings; therefore, whenever it is possible for each one of you, hasten ye to those cities and shine forth like unto the stars with the light of the Most Great Guidance. God says in the glorious Qur'án: "The soil was black and dried. Then we caused the rain to descend upon it and immediately it became green, verdant, and every kind of plant sprouted up luxuriantly." 1 In other words, He says the earth is black, but when the spring showers descend upon it that black soil is quickened, and variegated flowers are pushed forth. This means the souls of humanity belonging to the world of nature are black like unto the soil. But when the heavenly outpourings descend and the radiant effulgences appear, the hearts are resuscitated, are liberated from the darkness of nature and the flowers of divine mysteries grow and become luxuriant. Consequently man must become the cause of the illumination of the world of humanity and propagate the holy teachings revealed in the sacred books through the divine inspiration. It is stated in the blessed Gospel: Travel ye toward the East and toward the West and enlighten the people with the light of the Most Great Guidance, so that they may take a portion and share of eternal life. 2 **Praise be to God, that the Northeastern States are in the utmost capacity. Because the ground is rich, the rain of the divine outpouring is descending. Now you must become heavenly farmers and scatter pure seeds in the prepared soil. The harvest of every other seed is limited, but the bounty and the blessing of the seed of the divine teachings is unlimited.** Throughout the coming centuries and cycles many harvests will be gathered. Consider the work of former generations. During the lifetime of Jesus Christ the believing, firm souls were few and numbered, but the heavenly blessings descended so plentifully that in a number of years

countless souls entered beneath the shadow of the Gospel. God has said in the Qur'án: "One grain will bring forth seven sheaves, and every sheaf shall contain one hundred grains." 3 In other words, one grain will become seven hundred; and if God so wills He will double these also. It has often happened that one blessed soul has become the cause of the guidance of a nation. Now we must not consider our ability and capacity, nay, rather, we must fix our gaze upon the favors and bounties of God, in these days, Who has made of the drop a sea, and of the atom a sun.

Upon you be greeting and praise!

1. Qur'án 22:5.
2. Cf. Mark 16:15
3. Cf. Qur'án 2:261.



Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote an individual about how to go about resigning from his Masonic Order with an explanation not to "prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

Published on: March 25, 2026

March 26. On this date in 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer told him how to go about resigning from his Masonic Order with an explanation not to "prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

> 1390. Resignation from the Masonic Order
>
> "As regards your question about the Masonic Order, he considers that the honest and courageous thing for you to do is to inform your Lodge that you no longer consider yourself, for purely personal reasons, a Mason; and would like to have your name taken off their list. If they should press you for an explanation, which he imagines is unlikely, everybody being free to do as they please in this world, you can explain to them that in the present chaotic period the world is passing through, with so many streams and counterstreams of political thoughts and prejudices of all kinds, racial, religious, etc., storming the minds of men, that you wish to disentangle yourself from all association with the past and to stand alone, free in your own ideas.
>
> "He does not think that such an explanation will prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer,

March 26, 1956)

On February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political

tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)

'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously permitted membership in freemason lodges and non-Bahá'í religious organizations.

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian ...

A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: " **You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, Bahá'í-Mohammedan."

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá'ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> October 1921
>
> In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!
>
> Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost

joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: "Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, 'Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.' Now the same condition prevails."

This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, "What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?" let them answer: "We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu'l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant."

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements .

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would

later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order . When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> 1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient
>
> "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.
>
> "When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

> 1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like

" **As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.

"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straightforwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 1952, one day after the death of her father Hand of the Cause of God Wiliam Sutherland Maxwell, Shoghi Effendi appointed his wife Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum a Hand of the Cause of God as her father's replacement.

Published on: March 25, 2026

March 26. On this date in 1952, one day after the death of her father Hand of the Cause of God Wiliam Sutherland Maxwell , Shoghi Effendi appointed his wife Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum a Hand of the Cause of God as her father's replacement.

Mary Sutherland Maxwell was born in 1910 to William Sutherland Maxwell (the architect who would design the Shrine of the Bab and be named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Ellis Bolles Maxwell . Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

> Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.

It was at this home that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his talk discussing his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America :

> Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a

jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.

If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.**

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences,

arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful

abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.**

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central

Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the

sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 1930, Shoghi Effendi cabled Queen Marie of Romania and her daughter Ileana, who were visiting Egypt "Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit...

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From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania"...

> In 1930 her Majesty visited Egypt with her daughter Ileana. Shoghi Effendi, having had the unfortunate experience of indiscreet publicity during her visit to Cyprus, wired Alexandria on 19 February: "Advise Assembly in case Queen visits Egypt convey only written expression of welcome and appreciation on behalf Bahá'ís. Letter should be briefly carefully worded. No objection sending flowers. Individual communications should be strictly avoided. Inform Cairo."
>
> In the hope that at last the Queen would be able to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places in Palestine the Guardian had had Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to her

grandmother, Queen Victoria , copied in fine Persian calligraphy, and illuminated in Tehran. On 21 February he cabled Tehran: "Illuminated Tablet Queen Victoria should reach Haifa not later than March tenth on one or several pages." This was to be his gift to Her Majesty. Hearing no news of the Queen's plans once she had reached Egypt he wired to her direct on 8 March: "Her Majesty, the Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania , abroad Mayflower, Aswan. Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit His home in Haifa. Your Majesty 's acceptance to visit Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine and prison-city of 'Akka will apart from its historic significance be a source of immeasurable strength joy and hope to the silent sufferers of the Faith throughout the East. Our fondest love, prayers and best wishes for Your Majesty 's happiness and welfare."

Receiving no reply to this communication Shoghi Effendi sent another wire on 26 March to the Queen at the Hotel Semiramis in Cairo: "Fearing my former letter and telegram in which Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá joined me in extending invitation to Your Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana may have miscarried, we are pleased to express anew the pleasure it would give us all should Your Majesty find it feasible to visit Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Shrines and the prison-city of 'Akka. Deeply regret unauthorized publicity given by the Press." Two days later the Rumanian Minister in Cairo wired Shoghi Effendi: " Her Majesty regrets that not passing through Palestine she will not be able to visit you."

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter , Princess Ileana of Romania , disputes this claim :

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect

to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II , one of Samoa 's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston , who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas .

Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 1971, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking for a "clarification of the exclusion of women from membership in the Universal House of Justice in view of the great principle of the Cause of the equality of men and women."

Published on: March 25, 2026

March 26. On this date in 1971, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking for a "clarification of the exclusion of women from membership in the Universal House of Justice in view of the great principle of the Cause of the equality of men and women."

> 2073. Clarification Exclusion of Women on House of Justice
>
> "Your letter of March 26th, 1971 asking for clarification of the exclusion of women from membership in the Universal House of Justice in view of the great principle of the Cause of the equality of men and women has been received and we offer you the following comments.
>
> "In a Tablet to an early woman believer Abdu'l-Bahá stated: 'O maidservant of God! Know thou that in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men... From the spiritual point of view ... there is no difference between women and men...' He added, however: 'As to the House of Justice: according to the explicit text of the Law of God, its membership is exclusively reserved to men. There is divine wisdom in this which will presently be made manifest even as the mid-day sun.'
>
> "The beloved Guardian in reply to the same query from a believer pointed out in a letter written on his behalf on July 15th 1947: 'People must just accept the fact that women are not eligible to the International House of Justice. As the Master says the wisdom of this will be known in the future,

we can only accept, believing it is right, but not able to give an explanation calculated to silence an ardent feminist!'

"We must have faith in the Supreme Manifestation of God and His Exemplar, Whose prescience is revealed in such provisions which will one day 'be made manifest even as the mid-day sun.'"

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 26, 1971)

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12. On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the Houseof Justice .

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago Houseof Justice changed its name to the Houseof Spirituality . The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching .

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandaráni of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, CorinneTrue wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago Houseof Justice , noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the " Houseof Justice " had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

> Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."
>
> (30 November 1930)

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

> 270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.
>
> "...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and

try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male .

On March 30, 1997, the Universal House of Justice's Research Department responded to concerns about the translation of an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Corinne True, who had raised concerns about the exclusion of women from the Chicago House of Justice.

M E M O R A N D U M To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 30 March 1997

From: Research Department

Translation of "Umumi" in Tablets of Abdu'l-Bahá

In an email message to the Universal House of Justice dated 23 March 1997, a question has been raised concerning translation. In an undated Tablet from `Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Mrs. True (first translated into English by Dr. Ameen Farid in July 1909) the following statement has been revealed.

According to the ordinances of the Faith of God, women are the equals of men in all rights save only that of membership on the Universal House of Justice, for as hath been stated in the text of the Book, both the head and the members of the House of Justice are men. However, in all other bodies, such as the Temple Construction Committee, the Teaching Committee, the Spiritual Assembly, and in charitable and scientific associations, women share equally in all rights with men. (Revised translation from the Persian, authorized 1987)

In the above Tablet, for the title "The Universal House of Justice" the Persian words used are: "Baytu'l- Adl-i- Umumi". The question has been asked, whether the translation of the word "`Umumi", as "Universal", could be a mistake, since the word has the connotation of "public" or "general" in addition to its meaning as "universal". Thus, following such an argument, the reference in the above text could perhaps be not to the "Universal House of Justice" but to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago.

The word " umumi" as an adjective qualifying the title of the institution of the "House of Justice" appears three times in the Persian text of Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.1 Shoghi Effendi's translation of this adjective is invariably "Universal" with a capital "U". The passages from the Will and Testament are as follows:2

The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abha Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God (page 11). And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God and daysprings of knowledge and understanding, must be steadfast in God's faith and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one. Unto this body all things must be referred (page 14).

Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant. By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be found, after the manner of the customary elections in Western countries such as those

of England (pages 19-20).

There is no doubt whatsoever that by the term "Baytu'l- Adl-i- Umumi", in the above-mentioned Tablet, the institution intended, whose membership is to be of men only, is none other than "The Universal House of Justice" and not the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago.

Note

1. See "Alvah-i-Vasayay-i-Mubarakiy-i-Hadrat-i- Abdu'l-Bahá" (Cairo: Mirza Abu'l-Qasim Gulistanih-Shirazi, 1924-25), pages 12, 15, and 21. 2. See "Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá" Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), pages 11, 14, and 19-20. Translation of " Umumi" in Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá 30 March 1997

Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U. Fareed) was the son of Mirza Assad Ullah Fareed (who authored *The School of the Prophets*) and the nephew of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wife, Munírih Khánum. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter and had been active in promoting the Bahá'í Faith. He had also received a number of Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah ."

Fast-Dwindling Band of Covenant-Breakers

> Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah , within the cradle of the Faith, North America and Turkey, who demonstrated varying degrees, in the course of over thirty years, of faithlessness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
>
> The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being **the**

most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.

The second, history will recognize as one of the **most perfidious among the kinsmen** of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who, **driven by ungovernable cupidity** , committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.

The third will be chiefly remembered by the **pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition** impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.

All three, however **blinded by perversity** , could not have failed to perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.

Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 1950, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer referred to homosexual acts as "wrong," adding that "through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap."

Published on: March 25, 2026

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> 1223. Through Advice, Help of Doctors, and Prayer, Can Overcome This Handicap
>
> "No matter how devoted and fine the love may be between people of the same sex, to let it find expression in sexual acts is wrong. To say that it is ideal is no excuse. Immorality of every sort is really forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and homosexual relationships he looks upon as such, besides being against nature.
>
> "To be afflicted this way is a great burden to a conscientious soul. But through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap.
>
> "God judges each soul on its own merits. The Guardian cannot tell you what the attitude of God would be towards a person who lives a good life in most ways, but not in this way. All he can tell you is that it is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and that one so afflicted should struggle and struggle again to overcome it. We must be hopeful of God's Mercy but not impose upon it."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer,

March 26, 1950)

Among his numerous talks to American believers, Abu'l-Qásim Faizi touched on the topic of homosexuality . Abu'l-Qásim Faizi was a Hand of the Cause of God who studied at the American University of Beirut where he was good friends with Munib Shahid .

> Transcript : Beloved friends, we are living at the end of all ages. We are living at a time when an old civilization is dying, and parts of it are dead. It is dead and as a dead body **the stinking smells of a dead corpse is spread everywhere** . There are all these problems that are asked by the youth are these stinking smells of this dead body of civilization, and one of them is this problem. Bahá'u'lláh says **"my pen is ashamed to mention it."** Now see how corrupted the world is that **even in a Baha'i community somebody asked it** , mentions it. Bahá'u'lláh says his pen is ashamed to mention it. **This shows how degraded humanity is, into what a pitfall man has fallen, and how they have lost all standards all levels of life to them.** Now we must come together as I said at the beginning. We must be closer to each other. More in love with each other so that we form a great magnet. That magnet will attract all the people around you, and by coming into that atmosphere of the Bahá'í Faith they will forget their childish thoughts. All their problems will dissolve. The beloved Guardian had been asked about this. **He said refer to competent physicians. This is curable. It means it is a disease not something natural. Absolutely unnatural.**

Abu'l-Qásim Faizi' s reference to Shoghi Effendi's calling homosexuality a disease rests on several sources, such as a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer on March 26, 1950, which referred to homosexual acts as "wrong," adding that "through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap."

Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 1853, a group of five Bábís assassinated the Governor of Nayríz, resulting in violent retaliation against the Bábí community. Five days previous, Bahá'u'lláh and companions had entered Iraq subsequent to their exile after the attempted assassination of the Shah by Bábís

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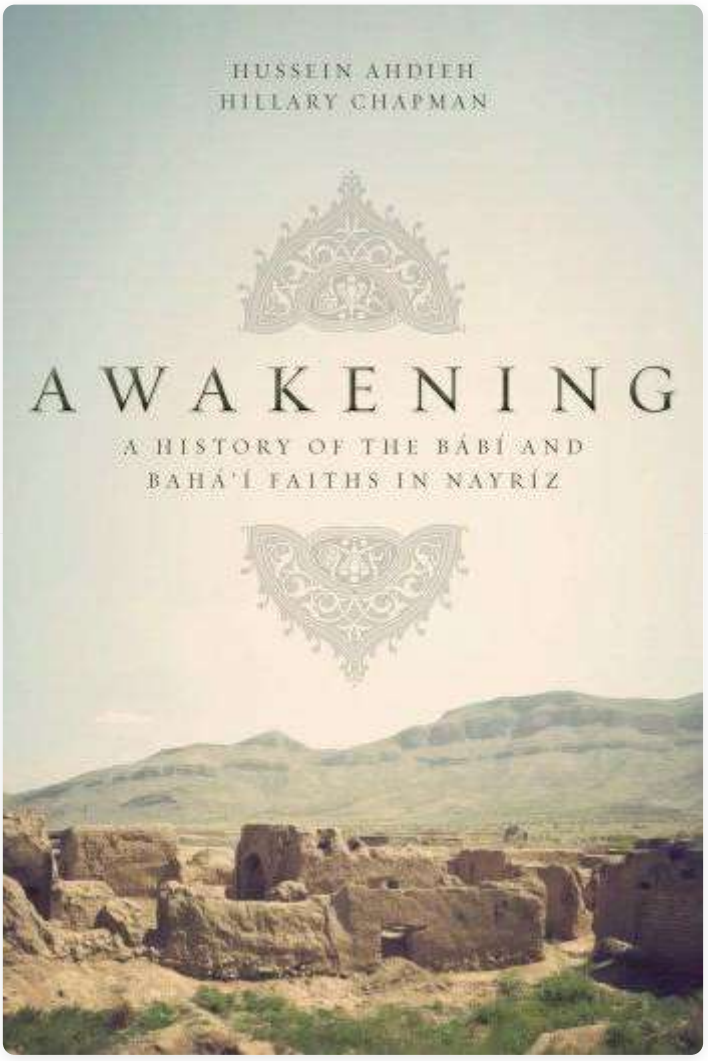

Comments

No comments.

March 26. On this date in 2016, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter on the one hundredth anniversary "To the chosen recipients of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets of the Divine Plan, the Bahá’ís of the United States and the Bahá’ís of Canada"

Published on: March 25, 2026

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The Universal House of Justice

26 March 201

To the chosen recipients of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets of the Divine Plan, the Bahá’ís of the United States and the Bahá’ís of Canada Dearly loved Friends,

We cannot allow this historic moment to pass without adding—to our message to the believers worldwide—a word to those whom the Author of the Divine Plan singled out for a sacred responsibility and whose triumphs and travails shaped much of the past century in accordance with His high expectations.

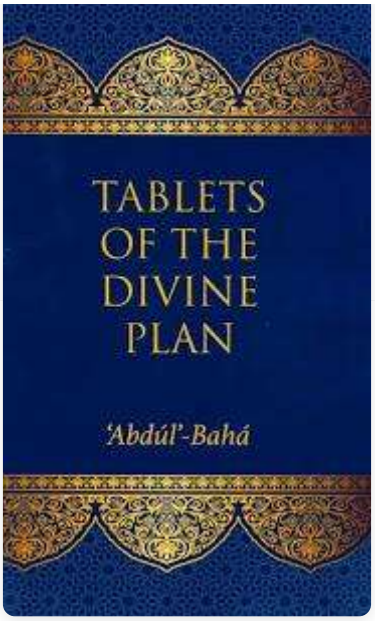
Soon after the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá determined that one of the principal objectives of His ministry would be to establish a community in North America under the banner of His Father’s Cause. He dispatched teachers, illumined pilgrims, embarked upon an unparalleled visit in His declining years, laid the cornerstone of your House of Worship, carved in fourteen Tablets addressed to you a divine mission, and “out of the abundance of His heart chose to bestow on His favored disciples, to the very last day of His life, the tokens of His unfailing solicitude.” Later, at a time when the believers in the Cradle of the Faith were hamstrung by persecution, when the light of the Faith in Europe was eclipsed by the growing spectre of another war, when the most vibrant center in central Asia was dismantled, and even the world center of the Faith itself was disrupted by a conflagration in the Holy Land, the “one

chief remaining citadel," the "mighty arm" that still raised aloft "the standard of an unconquerable Faith," was, Shoghi Effendi observed, "none other than the blessed community of the followers of the Most Great Name in the North American continent." He placed you—the Plan's chief executors and its co-executors—among the vanguard of Bahá'u'lláh's resistless legions.

It is impossible here to recount the range of your illustrious achievements during the past century. You have already accomplished that which is worthy of the gratitude and admiration of the entire Bahá'í world, but your mission is far from complete. After a century of resolute action, you should, more than ever before, be able to discern the straight path traced by heavenly inspiration across the many stages of the Divine Plan since its systematic execution began in 1937, and thus grasp the full implications of the latest stage about to open. The tasks confronting you are not identical with those of an earlier age. With the international spread of the Faith largely concluded, demands on you are now most pressing on the homefront. The process of entry by troops that emerged so tenuously in the Ten Year Crusade, and was fostered in the decades that followed, is now being extended through a sound process of community building in center after center in all those countries and territories that 'Abdu'l-Bahá marked out so long ago. Your sister communities, so many of which you helped to establish, are now mature, and you stand with them ready to take on the sterner challenges that lie ahead. The movement of your clusters to the farthest frontiers of learning will usher in the time anticipated by Shoghi Effendi at the start of your collective exertions, when the communities you build will directly combat and eventually eradicate the forces of corruption, of moral laxity, and of ingrained prejudice eating away at the vitals of society.

This is a time for jubilation. Take pride in the sacrifices and victories of so many devoted souls who arose in response to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's call. With the same spirit of renunciation shown by your predecessors, cast away the idle fancies and distractions of a world that has lost its way that you may consecrate yourselves in the next five years to the priceless opportunities and inescapable obligations of the latest stage of a spiritual enterprise on which the fate of humanity ultimately depends.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 1997, Hoda Mahmoudi, an Auxiliary Board Member, wrote Frederick Glaysher after his successful advocacy for talk.religion.bahai, an unmoderated newsgroup forum uncontrolled by the Bahá'í Administration. Hoda Mahmoudi currently holds The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace.

Published on: March 26, 2026

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> Date: Thu, 27 Mar 1997 15:45:46 -0500
>
> To: FG@hotmail.com
>
> From: Hoda Mahmoudi hmahmoudi@olivetnet.edu
>
> Dear Mr. Glaysher :
>
> I have been reading your e-mail postings recently. I would like to speak with you by phone about some of your throughts and opinions regarding matters relevant to the Baha'i Faith. As an Auxiliary Board member for Michigan, I am always interested in issues which relate to individual spiritual responsibility and the Baha'i Faith's principle of unity. My phone number is 616/789-0590.
>
> Hope to hear from you soon.
>
> Hoda

[Hoda Mahmoudi, Ph.D.]

Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

Olivet College

Olivet, MI 49076

616/749-7614

Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "...knowledge and understanding in the vital field of Bahá'í scholarship will be made by those who...are also thoroughly imbued with love for the Faith and the determination to grow in the comprehension of its teachings."

Published on: March 26, 2026

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> Strengthening the Core of the Believers' Faith
>
> This need for Bahá'í scholars to become thoroughly deepened in the spirit of the Cause, and well versed in its Teachings is emphasised in the following passage:
>
> > In the application of the social laws of the Faith, most of the difficulties can be seen to arise not only from outright disobedience, but also from the actions of those who, **while careful to observe the letter of the law, try to go as far as it will permit them away from the spirit which lies at its heart.** A similar tendency can be noted among some Bahá'í scholars. **The great advances in knowledge and understanding in the vital field of Bahá'í scholarship will be made by those who, while well versed in their subjects and adhering to the principles of research, are also thoroughly imbued with love for the Faith and the**

determination to grow in the comprehension of its teachings.

(From a letter dated 27 March 1983 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

In the same letter the Supreme Body calls attention to the danger of intellectual pride, which a Bahá'í scholar must combat within himself, in these words:

The House of Justice feels that **Bahá'í scholars must beware of the temptations of intellectual pride** . 'Abdu'l-Bahá has warned the friends in the West that they would be subjected to intellectual tests, and the Guardian reminded them of this warning. There are many aspects of western thinking which have been exalted to a status of unassailable principle in the general mind, that time may well show to have been erroneous or, at least, only partially true. **Any Bahá'í who rises to eminence in academic circles will be exposed to the powerful influence of such thinking.**

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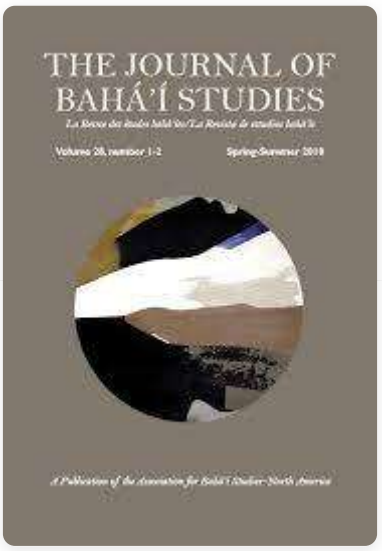

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Comments

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> 1091. Relationship Between Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> "The statement that the Boards of Counsellors outrank the National Institutions of the Faith has a number of implications. A Board of Counsellors has the particular responsibility of caring for the protection and propagation of the Faith throughout a continental zone which contains a number of national Bahá'í communities. In performing these tasks it neither directs nor instructs the Spiritual Assemblies or individual believers, but it has the necessary rank to enable it to ensure that it is kept properly informed and that the Spiritual Assemblies give due consideration to its advice and recommendations. However, the essence of the relationships between Bahá'í institutions is loving consultation and a common desire to serve the Cause of God rather than a matter of rank or station."
>
> (From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, March 27, 1978)

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian , appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council , naming Mason Remey as the Council 's President and describing it as an

embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian , as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God" , the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council , into the Universal House of Justice .

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

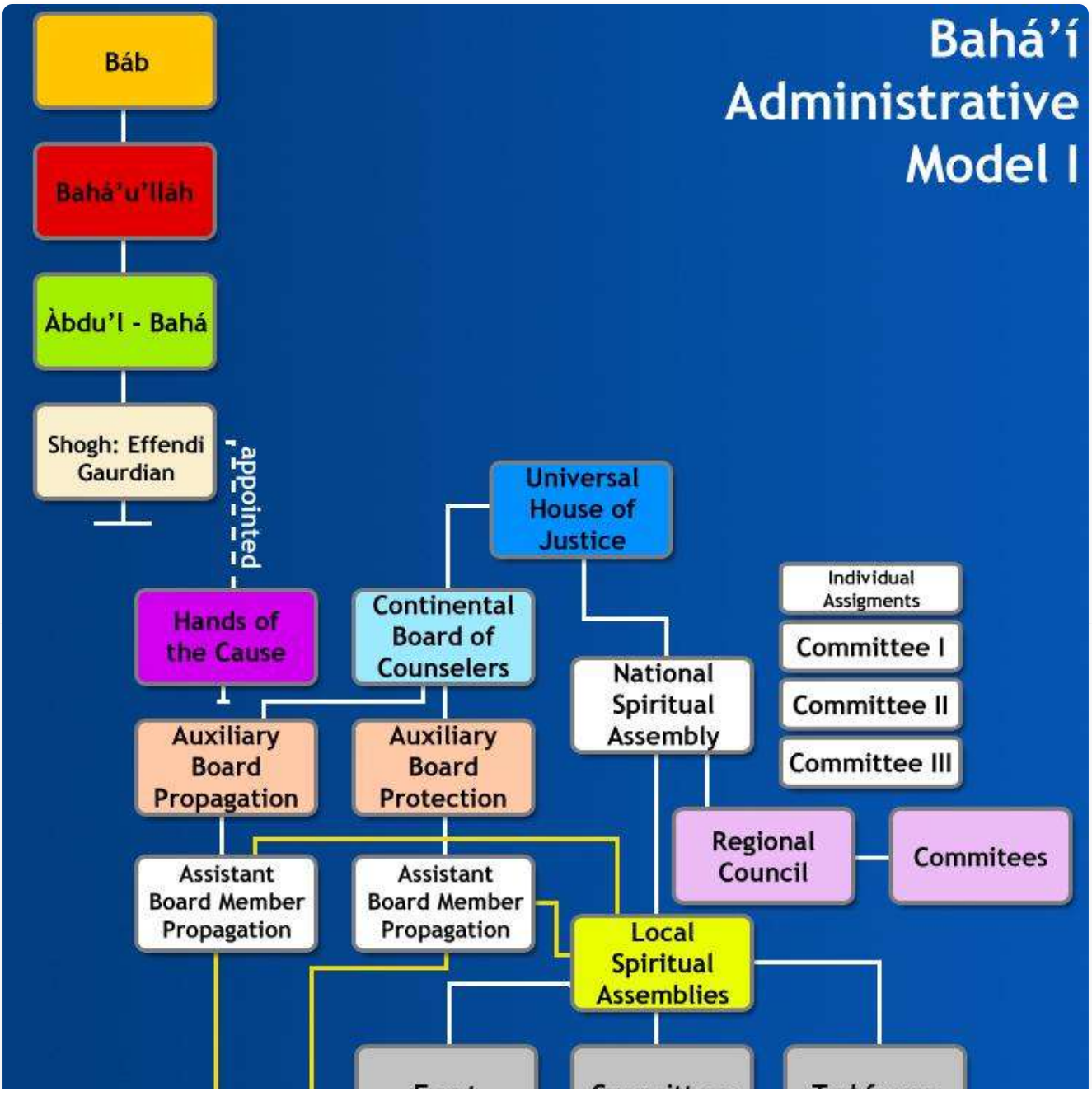
In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies , who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies , who then elect the Universal House of Justice . With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration , particularly the International Teaching Centre . In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre . In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura .

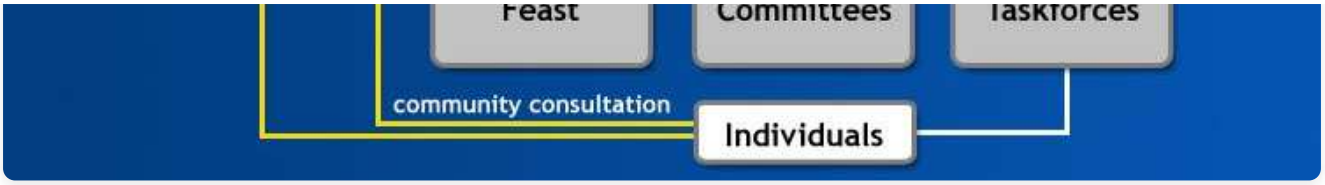
With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands , the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities.
Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice . Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served

under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice , and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice .





Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote a memorandum about a reference to the Zoroastrian text Dinkird, or "Acts of the Religion" (dín-kird) in John Ferraby's "All Things Made New", and on the authenticity of the Zoroastrian scriptures.

Published on: March 26, 2026

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Zoroastrianism, Reference to, in All Things Made New by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1999-03-27 MEMORANDUM To: Universal House of Justice From: Research Department A Quotation in All Things Made New

The Research Department has studied the email message of 7 January 1999 to the Universal House of Justice from Mr. xxxx. Mr. xxxx states that he recently found on a Bahá'í Web site a quotation from the Hand of the Cause of God John Ferraby's All Things Made New.1 The source of the quotation is given as "Dínkird", which he takes to be the same as "Denkard" or "Dinkard", that is, a "Zoroastrian encyclopedia of the 9th century, A.D., rather than a work of Zoroaster". He has tried to find this quotation in a Web version of the 1896 translation of the Denkard but has not found anything resembling it. He asks whether the Research Department is aware of "any Zoroastrian text identical to or similar to" the quotation in question. As he has been unable to gain access to a copy of Mr. Ferraby's book, he also asks whether the quotation appears in all of the editions.

Source of the Quotation in All Things Made New

The text in question is the following: When a thousand two hundred and some years have passed from the inception of the religion of the Arabian and the overthrow of the

Kingdom of Irán and the degradation of the followers of My religion, a descendant of the Iranian kings will be raised up as a prophet.2

As Mr. xxxx is aware, the only source provided for this quotation in All Things Made New is "Dinkird",3 which is translated as "Acts of the Religion". He is correct that the Denkard is a 9th century compilation of the preserved Zoroastrian scriptural materials, and summaries and commentaries on the contents of the Avesta. It is written in Middle Persian using the Pahlavi script. With regard to his comment that, in the Web version, the first 65 chapters of Book III were missing, we note that according to the Encyclopedia Iranica, the Denkard was originally divided into nine volumes of unequal importance, but the first two and the beginning of the third have been lost.4 The Research Department has neither the time nor the resources to attempt to identify the specific text in the Denkard which is the source of the quotation in question. This is a project for future Bahá'í scholars. However, it is interesting to note that in Muhammad Nátiq's Al-Munázarátu'd-Díníyyah, there are quoted two passages which, if combined, appear to provide a similar text.5 These two passages are referenced to the Denkard, but unfortunately no additional identifying information is provided (see photocopy of the relevant page attached).

Regarding whether the quotation in question appears in all of the editions of Mr. Ferraby's book, it does appear in each of the three editions, as follows: First Edition, 1957, page 171. Revised Edition, 1975, page 171. Second Revised Edition, 1987, page 174.

Authenticity of Zoroastrian Scripture

As Mr. xxxx suggests, we do not consider authoritative the Zoroastrian scripture to which we have access today. In a letter dated 22 June 1943, written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual, we read: In the Bahá'í teachings it states that all the Prophets have foretold a Promised One Who is Bahá'u'lláh. We cannot be sure of the authenticity, word for word, of any of the past Holy Scriptures except the Qur'án, as they were either not written down during the Prophet's lifetime or have been changed in the course of time and the originals lost; what we can be sure of is that when Bahá'u'lláh or the Master stated that Zoroaster foretold a Promised One's coming, it is correct. The Zoroastrians have no way of contradicting this assertion, as they

themselves know their scriptures are not in the original form, and therefore not absolutely authentic.

According to scholars of the subject, of all the Zoroastrian scripture presently known, only the Gathas, 17 hymns which have been preserved in the ancient language spoken by Zoroaster, are attributable to Him.

Attachment [see photocopies below] All Things Made New: A Comprehensive Outline of the Bahá'í Faith, 2nd. Rev. Edition (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987). Ibid., p. 174. Other spellings of this word are Denkard, Dînkard, and Denkart. Encyclopedia Iranica, vol. VII (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1996), p. 285. (Cairo: Faaju'lláh Dhakí Al-Kurdí, 1342 AH), p. 37.

Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 1884, Charles William Dunning was born. He would be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Orkney Islands.

Published on: March 26, 2026

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Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 1864, A. L. M. Nicolas was born in Rasht, in the Gilan Province of Iran where his father was stationed with the French Consular Service. A. L. M. Nicolas was an historian and orientalist, official interpreter of the Legation French abroad, and the first Western Bábí.

Published on: March 26, 2026

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A. L. M. Nicolas was born in Rasht, in the Gilan Province of Iran on March 27, 1864. His father, Louis Jean Baptiste Nicolas, was stationed with the French Consular Service in Persia.

A. L. M. Nicolas would become a historian and French orientalist, official interpreter of the Legation French abroad, and France's consul general in Tabriz.

After reading Gobineau 's *Trois ans en Asie, 1855-1858* he checked all the information Gobineau had written in his book, corrected some of it, and then began to translate the writings of the Báb. Over the course of translating the Báb's *Persian Bayán* and *Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih)* (The Seven Proofs) from Persian to French, he developed a growing appreciation for the teachings and person of the Báb, and converted to Bábism, becomin the first Western Bábí. He wrote various works *Seyyed Ali Mohamed dit le Báb* (1905) and was the first to translate a work of the Báb into French: the *Arabic Beyan* and the *Persian Beyan* , an *Essai sur le Chéikhisme* (1911) and several articles in newspapers such that Review of the Muslim World. Nicolas became knight of the Legion of Honour in 1909.

A. L. M. Nicolas died on February 28, 1939

Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Bahá'í view of 'reincarnation' is essentially different from the Hindu conception. The Bahá'ís believe in the return of the attributes and qualities, but maintain that the...The doctrine of metempsychosis upheld by the Hindus is fallacious."

Published on: March 26, 2026

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1820. Bahá'í Position on Reincarnation

"It is clear from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh about the nature of the soul and of life after death as published in 'Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh', that the Bahá'í position on this subject is wholly incompatible with the theory of reincarnation . We suggest that you refer this friend to the explanation of 'return' as given by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitab-i-Iqan and the statements made by Abdu'l-Bahá in 'Some Answered Questions'.

"...for your additional information we give the following quotations from letters written on behalf of the beloved Guardian on this subject:

'No revelation from God has ever taught reincarnation ; this is a man-made conception. The soul of man comes into being at conception.' (To an individual believer, April 1, 1946)

'The Bahá'í view of 'reincarnation' is essentially different from the Hindu conception. The Bahá'ís believe in the return of the attributes and qualities,

but maintain that the essence or the reality of things cannot be made to return. Every being keeps its own individuality, but some of his qualities can be transmitted. The doctrine of metempsychosis upheld by the Hindus is fallacious.' (To an individual believer, March 27, 1938)

'Evolution in the life of the individual starts with the formation of the human embryo and passes through various stages, and even continues after death in another form. The human spirit is capable of infinite development.

'Man's identity or rather his individuality is never lost. His reality as a person remains intact throughout the various states of his development. He does not preexist in any form before coming into this world.' (To an individual believer, November 26, 1939)

'We as Bahá'ís are not influenced by the categorical assertions of scholars. We believe that what Bahá'u'lláh has revealed and Abdu'l-Bahá has written is from God, and divinely inspired; that Bahá'u'lláh is a Manifestation of God, and has access to a knowledge denied to ordinary human beings.'" (Letter written to an individual believer, April 22, 1954 on behalf of the Guardian)

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Monaco, August 5, 1969)

Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote regarding "the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace" against the 2003 invasion of Iraq that "current demonstrations are not intended to promote peace in principle but are focused on a specific dispute among governments."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 27. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote regarding "the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace" against the 2003 invasion of Iraq that "such occasions are motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil and confusion in the world...current demonstrations are not intended to promote peace in principle but are focused on a specific dispute among governments."

> 27 March 2003
>
> Transmitted electronically
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> Your email message of 4 March 2003 has been received at the Bahá'í World Centre, and we can reply as follows. You state that there are large-scale demonstrations arising in your community and in communities around the world, and **you inquire about the appropriateness of Bahá'ís participating in demonstrations for peace** . It is important to keep in mind that while these activities are generally carried out in the name of peace, **such occasions are motivated by highly political and controversial sentiments at a time of turmoil and confusion in the world** . Not only would it be contrary to the Bahá'í principle of non-involvement in politics for individual believers, or Bahá'í institutions, to

become associated with such activities, it could also be harmful to the interests of the Faith internationally. The point to bear in mind here is that **current demonstrations are not intended to promote peace in principle but are focused on a specific dispute among governments.** As you can no doubt understand, Bahá'í participation in public demonstrations involving controversial issues would undermine the Faith's essential purpose of promoting unity in all aspects of human affairs, and your desire to remain focused on the essential work of the Faith is deeply appreciated.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

cc: National Assembly of the United States (by email)

In the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction was leaked to the media by David Kelly, a Bahá'í authority on biological warfare, employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq.

David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide on July 17, 2003, two days after appearing before a before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

On August 11, 2003, *The Independent* carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Southern States," which is the 2nd part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 27. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Southern States* , which is the 2nd part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan* , in the garden adjacent to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh , and addressed to the Bahá'ís of sixteen Southern States of the United States: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* . These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order . Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> O ye heralds of the Kingdom of God :
>
> A FEW days ago an epistle was written to those divine believers, but because these days are the days of Naw-Rúz , you have come to my mind and I am sending you this greeting for this glorious feast. All the days are blessed, but this feast is the national fête of Persia. The Persians have been holding it for several thousand years past. In reality every day which man

passes in the mention of God, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and calling the people to the Kingdom of God , that day is his feast. Praise be to God that you are occupied in the service of the Kingdom of God and are engaged in the promulgation of the religion of God by day and by night. Therefore all your days are feast days. There is no doubt that the assistance and the bestowal of God shall descend upon you.

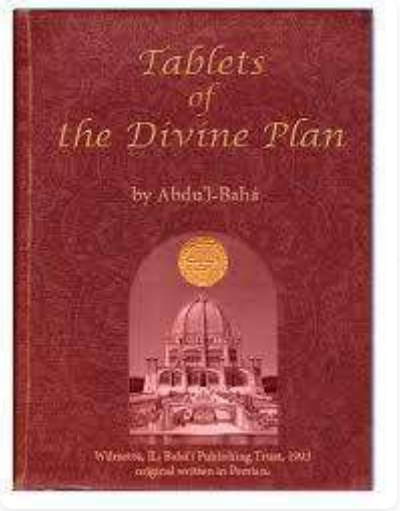
In the Southern States of the United States, **the friends are few, that is, in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas** . Consequently you must either go yourselves or send a number of blessed souls to those states, so that they may guide the people to the Kingdom of Heaven . One of the holy Manifestations, addressing a believing soul, has said that, if a person become the cause of the illumination of one soul, it is better than a boundless treasury. "O 'Alí! If God guide, through thee, one soul, it is better for thee than all the riches!" Again He says, "Direct us to the straight path!" 1 that is, Show us the right road. It is also mentioned in the Gospel: Travel ye to all parts of the world and give ye the glad tidings of the appearance of the Kingdom of God. 2

In brief, I hope you will display in this respect the greatest effort and magnanimity. It is assured that you will become assisted and confirmed. A person declaring the glad tidings of the appearance of the realities and significances of the Kingdom is like unto a farmer who scatters pure seeds in the rich soil. The spring cloud will pour upon them the rain of bounty, and unquestionably the station of the farmer will be raised in the estimation of the lord of the village, and many harvests will be gathered.

Therefore, ye friends of God! Appreciate ye the value of this time and be ye engaged in the sowing of the seeds, so that you may find the heavenly blessing and the lordly bestowal. Upon you be Bahá'u'l-Abhá!

1. Qur'án 1:6

2. Cf. Mark 16:15.



Comments

No comments.

March 27. On this day in 1957, Shoghi Effendi appointed Agnes Baldwin Alexander as a Hand of the Cause of God, replacing Hand of the Cause of God Gorge Townshend who had passed away two days previously in Dublin.

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 27. On this day in 1957, Shoghi Effendi appointed Agnes Baldwin Alexander as a Hand of the Cause of God, replacing Hand of the Cause of God Gorge Townshend who had passed away two days previously in Dublin.

George Townshend was an Irish Anglican clergyman who had renounced his orders to the Anglican Church in 1947, at the age of 70. Shoghi Effendi designated him a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951 and once said of George Townshend that he feels "Mr. Townshend's services to the Faith can best be rendered by his writing about it, as he obviously has an outstanding ability in this direction..." Of the books that Townshend wrote, *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh* is notable for the changes made from the original publication to subsequent editions published after the passing of Shoghi Effendi. For example, a statement about the "first and present Guardian" has been removed and a section discussing "the lineage of succeeding Guardians" has been replaced with a section discussing "divinely guided institutions" in general.

Agnes Baldwin Alexander had been born in Honolulu on July 21, 1875, to descendants of Christian missionary families, the Baldwins and the Alexanders, who were among the families of whom James A. Michener said, "They came to the islands to do good, and they did right well."

She became a Bahá'í in 1900 while visiting Italy.

After returning in 1901, she remained in Hawaii for 12 years, and of her experiences there wrote *Personal Recollections of a Bahai Life in the Hawaiian Islands*. Upon 'Abdu'l-Baha's request, Agnes Baldwin Alexander moved to Japan in 1914. In 1921 she became the first to introduce the religion to Korea. Except for extended vacations in

Hawaii, Alexander spent over thirty years in Japan. Also at the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used that new international language to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences. At Shoghi Effendi's request, Alexander wrote two histories: *Forty Years of the Bahá'í Cause in Hawaii: 1902-1942* and *History of the Bahá'í Faith in Japan: 1914-1938* . Both of these volumes were published posthumously. In 1957, Shoghi Effendi appointed her a Hand of the Cause of God. In 1964, Alexander represented the Universal House of Justice, at the election of Hawaii's first National Spiritual Assembly, which is distinct from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. After suffering a broken hip in 1965, and spending two years in a Tokyo hospital, Alexander returned home to Honolulu in 1967. On January 1, 1971, Alexander died. She was buried behind Kawaiahao Church with her missionary forebears.

Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1971, the Universal House of Justice published guidelines for the process of pre-publication Review of Bahá'í publications, outlining several principles and observations addressed to Bahá'í authors and Bahá'í publishers.

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Reviewing, publishers, and authors: a summary prepared on behalf of the Universal House of Justice

28 March 1971

(also published in *Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963-86*)

The following principles and observations are called to the attention of National Spiritual Assemblies and all those concerned with the production of Bahá'í publications:

REVIEWING

Obligatory

At this early stage of the Cause all works by Bahá'ís which deal with the Faith, whether in the form of books, pamphlets, translations, poems, songs, radio and television scripts, films, recordings, etc. must be approved before submission for publication, whether to a Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í publisher. In the case of material for purely local consumption the competent authority is the Local Spiritual Assembly, otherwise the National Spiritual Assembly (through its Reviewing Committee) is the approving authority.

A Temporary Measure

That this measure is both obligatory and temporary is borne out by the following statements of the Guardian:

They must supervise in these days when the Cause is still in its infancy all Bahá'í publications and translations, and provide in general for a dignified and accurate presentation of all Bahá'í literature and its distribution to the general public.

("Principles of Bahá'í Administration", pp. 38-39)

...the administration of the Cause ... should guard against such rigidity as would clog and fetter the liberating forces released by His Revelation.... the present restrictions imposed on the publication of Bahá'í literature will be definitely abolished ....

('The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh", p. 9)

Purpose of Review

The purpose of review is to protect the Faith from misrepresentation and to ensure dignity and accuracy in its presentation. In general the function of a Reviewing Committee is to say whether the work submitted gives an acceptable presentation of the Cause or not. Reviewers may win the gratitude and good will of authors by calling attention to such things as occasional grammatical or spelling errors, but approval should not be refused on such grounds; all such details are editorial matters for agreement between author and publisher.

Translations

As regards English, the beloved Guardian's translations are obviously the most authentic and should be used. If, for some particular reason, a Bahá'í author when quoting a passage of the Sacred Text which has been rendered into English by the Guardian, wishes to use a translation other than that made by the beloved Guardian, his request may be referred to the Universal House of Justice. Passages from the Sacred Text not translated by Shoghi Effendi, but already in English and published with approval, may be used. If an author wishes to make his own translation of a passage not already translated by Shoghi Effendi, the new translation may be submitted to the Universal House of Justice for approval.

With the exception of certain oriental languages such as Turkish, Arabic and Urdu, which are related to the original Persian or Arabic, new translations of the Sacred Text

into languages other than English must be made from the Guardian's English translation where it exists. When there is no translation into English by Shoghi Effendi of a particular passage, the National Spiritual Assembly concerned should seek the advice of the Universal House of Justice. When translations already exist, which are not made from the Guardian's English text, but have been published and approved, they may be used.

Reviewing Committees

It is recommended that Reviewing Committees be small, composed of two or three believers with adequate education and knowledge of the Cause. It is essential that works submitted be dealt with promptly. The standards to be upheld by reviewers are the following: (a) conformity with the Teachings, (b) accuracy, (c) dignity in presentation. The Spiritual Assembly, on the basis of its Reviewing Committee's report, gives or withholds approval of the work.

Approval of Works Already Reviewed Elsewhere

While a National Spiritual Assembly intending to publish Bahá'í literature is encouraged to accept the review of another National Spiritual Assembly, it is not required to do so and has the right to review any work prior to authorizing its publication or republication by its own Publishing Trust or publisher in its area of jurisdiction. This does not apply to works by Hands of the Cause, which are reviewed in the Holy Land.

A National Spiritual Assembly which receives for approval a manuscript from outside its area of jurisdiction should enquire whether it has already been submitted for review elsewhere, and in the case of its having been refused approval, the reasons for such refusal.

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHERS

Bahá'í publishers may not publish any work about the Faith until it has been approved by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where it is to be published.

Approval of a work imposes no obligation upon any Bahá'í publisher to publish it.

Whatever "house styles" Publishing Trusts and other Bahá'í publishers may adopt,

transliteration of oriental terms into languages using the Roman alphabet must at present be according to the system chosen by the Guardian and described in volumes of "The Bahá'í World".

Cables

Cables in English should be printed exactly as received, without interpolation.

Editing

Bahá'í publishers, when accepting a work for publication, will make their own arrangements with the author on all such matters as accuracy of quotations, documentation, grammar and spelling, dates and even the re-writing of passages which the publisher may consider need improving, or he may ask the author to write additional material or to delete part of the original manuscript. Although such matters are entirely between the author and publisher, any addition, deletion or changes which affect the meaning must be submitted for review with the relative context.

Approval Notice

Although no Bahá'í work may be published without approval, it is not mandatory to print an approval notice in any publication. BAHÁ'Í AUTHORS

Bahá'í authors should welcome review of their works, and can greatly assist promptness in review by supplying a sufficient number of copies of the manuscript for each member of the Reviewing Committee to have one.

Bahá'í authors may submit their works for review to any National Spiritual Assembly, and may send their works, once approved, to any publisher they like, Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í, at home or abroad. It should be remembered, however, that the approval should be given by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where the work is to be first published. And in the case of a non-Bahá'í publisher the author should insist on use of the system of transliteration at present used by the Faith for languages employing the Roman alphabet.

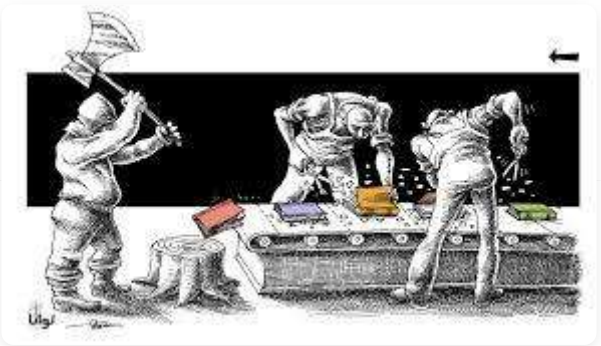
It is hoped that Bahá'í authors will provide a constant stream of new works. Introductory books, commentaries, dissertations on various aspects of the Revelation, text books, histories, reviews, audio-visual material are all needed to stimulate study

of the Faith and to promote the vital teaching work. SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE

1. Bahá'í publications reviewed and published in one country may be sold or offered for sale anywhere in the world. This includes the right of the publisher or the author to promote the sale of the publication in any legitimate manner including the right to advise the Bahá'ís in any country of its contents, price and availability. It does not include the right to insist that National Assemblies, their Publishing Trusts or Publishing Committees stock, promote or advertise the publication or offer it for sale. If any National Spiritual Assembly feels that a book would be damaging to the Faith in its country, it may represent this fact to the publisher and author and ask them not to promote it in that particular country.

It is hoped that there will be great cooperation among those publishing Bahá'í literature, and Publishing Trusts are encouraged to supply to believers, the book trade and libraries, all Bahá'í publications from any country.

1. Believers should not be prevented from purchasing Bahá'í books reviewed and published in other countries.
2. National Spiritual Assemblies are not obliged to furnish mailing lists of believers to publishers, but publishers may compile their own mailing lists and use them for the announcement and promotion of sale of their Bahá'í books and literature.
3. Five copies of every new book and every new edition (not reprints) should be sent to the World Centre.



Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1912, the S.S. Cedric, carrying ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the U.S., arrived in Naples. Shoghi Effendi, Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn, and Áqá Khusraw were refused further passage by reason of illness and were taken ashore. Shoghi Effendi had a contagious eye infection.

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On March 25, 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá boarded the S.S. Cedric in Alexandria, heading for the United States .

Others with him included Shoghi Effendi, Asadu'lláh-i-Qumí, Dr Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U Fareed), Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn, Áqá Khusraw, and Mahmúd-i-Zarqání (the author of *Mahmud's Diary*).

The ship arrived in Naples harbour on March 28, 1912, and on the next day several Bahá'ís from America and Britain boarded the ship. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his group did not disembark for fear of being confused with Turks during the ongoing Italo-Turkish War.

Shoghi Effendi, Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn, and Áqá Khusraw were refused further passage by reason of illness and were taken ashore. Shoghi Effendi had an contagious eye infection.

From Naples, the group sailed on to New York. The group included 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Asadu'lláh-i-Qumí, Dr Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U Fareed), Mahmúd-i-Zarqání, Mr and Mrs Percy Woodcock and their daughter from Canada, Mr and Mrs Austin from Denver, Colorado, and Miss Louisa Mathew .

The S.S. Cedric passed Gibraltar on April 3 and arrived in New York harbour on the morning of April 11.

Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U. Fareed) was the son of Mirza Assad Ullah Fareed (who authored *The School of the Prophets*) and the nephew of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wife, Munírih Khánum. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter and had been active in promoting the Bahá'í Faith. He had also received a number of Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah ."

Fast-Dwindling Band of Covenant-Breakers

> Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah , within the cradle of the Faith, North America and Turkey, who demonstrated varying degrees, in the course of over thirty years, of faithlessness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
>
> The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being **the most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate** in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously

schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.

The second, history will recognize as one of the **most perfidious among the kinsmen** of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who, **driven by ungovernable cupidity** , committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.

The third will be chiefly remembered by the **pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition** impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.

All three, however **blinded by perversity** , could not have failed to perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.

From the first entry, dated Monday, March 25, 1912, in *Mahmúd's Diary: The Diary of Mírzá Mahmúd-i-Zarqání Chronicling 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Journey to America* ...

Monday, March 25, 1912

'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure from Ramleh, Alexandria

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was saying farewell amid the tears, lamentations and sadness of the friends and members of the Holy Family who watched their beloved's departure, one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daughters, Rúhá Khánum, was seriously ill. It was evident that this deeply affected the Master. It was in these circumstances that 'Abdu'l-Bahá left Alexandria on the morning of Monday, March 25, 1912. Although He had already bidden the friends farewell and had embraced most of them, many accompanied Him to the ship, expressing their sadness and anguish at their impending separation from Him. After visiting, walking about the ship and receiving His cabin assignment, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to the main hall where He bestowed His love, affection and assurance on each of the friends. After an hour, the

friends left the ship in tears. Then the S. S. *Cedric*, an Italian liner from the White Star Line, set sail, honored to be the means of transporting the Most Holy Being and becoming the focus of the envy of the whole earth.

The ship left the port of Alexandria with a burst of steam and great fanfare. `Abdu'l-Bahá's companions numbered six: Shoghi Effendi, Siyyid Asadu'lláh-i-Qumí, Dr Amínu'lláh Faríd, Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn, Áqá Khusraw and this servant, Mahmúd-i-Zarqání. After the ship left, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to the first class dining room and gave permission to His companions to have lunch with Him. Although our cabins were in second class, arrangements had been made for us to dine in the first class dining room with Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked at lunch:

> The doctor of this ship is an Italian and, as Italians are at war with the Turks, the doctor, imagining us to be Turks and wanting to go to war with us, says that Khusraw's eyes are affected with a disease which will make him unfit to land in America. He wished to examine the eyes of all, but Dr Faríd prevented him.

Then He told Khusraw not to worry, that He would try to intercede on his behalf and not allow them to prevent his travel. He said, 'Don't worry; to the extent possible I will not allow you to be sent back. We are ready to give our lives for one another.' 'Abdu'l-Bahá then went to His cabin in the upper deck and rested for awhile. Afternoon tea was served in the main salon of the ship. 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke about the excessive drinking and eating habits of the Europeans. `It is hardly two hours since they took their lunch and now they are having a full meal with their tea.' Then He spoke about the Italians, saying that at the time of the Romans they were famous for their knowledge and virtues but now their character seems to have declined like the Greeks. And similarly the Egyptians. He said:

> During the last days of our stay in Egypt, we went to Tanta for the repair of the tomb of Hájí Abu'l Qásim and from there went to Mansurih. In Tanta one of the English officials was our friend,

who held us in great honor and showed us great respect everywhere. Observing this, the natives were more respectful and polite to us than even to the said officer, and throughout the town, everyone, young and old, even the policemen in the street, saluted us. But, at another time when we went alone to Mansurih, because the people did not observe outward riches, they did not pay any attention to us. This is the condition of hypocritical people who only look to outward appearances.

This evening 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not dine in the main hall but instead the waiter brought His dinner to the cabin. After eating He went to the lounge, rested on a comfortable couch for a short time and then returned to His cabin to sleep.

Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Promise Day is Come", a book-length letter written to the Bahá’ís of the West, about Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the kings and rulers, and their relation to historical events.

Published on: March 26, 2026

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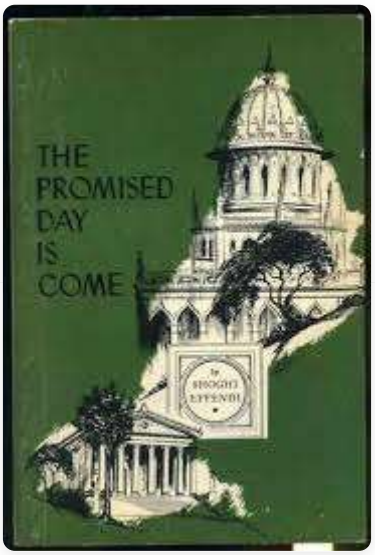

Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1874, Albert Windust, later a member of the Chicago House of Spirituality and the first publisher of Bahá'í literature in the United States, was born. In 1910 he founded and started printing the first Bahá'í monthly publication "Star of the West".

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From Bahá'í Chronicles ...

> Albert R. Windust
>
> Born: March 28, 1874
>
> Death: March 9, 1956
>
> Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois
>
> Location of Death: Berrien County, Michigan
>
> Burial Location: Mount Hope Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois
>
> "Deeply grieved passing much loved greatly admired staunch ardent promoter Faith, Albert Windust, Herald Covenant, whose notable services Heroic Formative Ages Faith unforgettable. Assure friends relatives fervently supplicating progress soul Kingdom." – Shoghi
>
> Albert Robert Windust was born on Chicago's west side near Hull House. His parents were Thomas (1849-1913) and Sarah Sheffield Windust (1842-1887). His father was a printer, who, shortly after Albert was born, moved with his family to a section of Chicago known as Woodlawn. They

were members of the Episcopal Church. Mrs. Windust, a school teacher and a very active church worker, was the founder of the First Christ Church of Woodlawn (Episcopalian).

In his early years, Albert Windust was not physically strong and this may have accounted for the fact that he had very little formal schooling. He was tutored in his early years by his mother and entered a public school at the fourth grade level. He ended his formak education in the sixth grade. Despite this, Albert Windust during his life attained a depth of knowledge and spiritual wisdom reached by very few.

At the age of fourteen Albert became an apprentice in the printing firm where his father worked. The following November his mother died. His interest in nature awakened a desire to draw, and he became a pupil at Chicago's Art Institute. Through associations made in the printing business, he illustrated stories of many authors, including Opie Read and H. Rider Haggard.

Albert had an inquisitive and questioning nature. He learned of and became interested in the Bahá'í Faith. Word of this came to the ears of the minister of the Methodist Church of which he was a member. The sermon the following Sunday dealt with following false gods. While the sermon thundered around his ears, Albert Windust heard the words of the Lord that had been said to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." He left the church.

Thornton Chase, the first American believer, became instrumental in attracting a small group, among them Albert who, in 1897, became a Bahá'í and gave undeviating devotion to the Faith until the day of his death. He was unquestionably one of its strongest and most competent servants. No activity that concerned the Cause in America but was strongly influenced by his devoted efforts.

In 1900 he married Lucy Roberts (1875-1929) and they had three daughters, Sarah R. (1903-1940), Isabelle and Ethel.

The list of Albert Windust's achievements for the Bahá'í Faith is a long one. He was a member of the first Spiritual Assembly (Chicago). This body enjoyed the distinction of bearing the name of Baytu'l-'Adl (House of Justice) and was so addressed by 'Abdu'l-Baha in a series of Tablets, the first of which, before it was dispatched from the prison of 'Akka, had been engrossed by Mishkin-Qalam, the celebrated Persian penman, in all the known forms of Persian writing.

As a member of that first Assembly, Albert was active in carrying on correspondence with the Bahá'ís of the Orient which led to building the Bahá'í House of Worship in the United States. Through letters between the Bahá'ís of Ishqabad, Russia, and the "House of Spirituality" in Chicago, news was received concerning the erection of the House of Worship in Ishqabad. This activity had been initiated by "Abdu'l-Bahá and was a marvelous means of stimulating the work of the Cause in America. Albert Windust was a member of the committee which drafted the supplication to 'Abdu'l-Bahá asking permission to erect a Bahá'í House of Worship in the United States.

Albert became the first publisher of the Writings of the Faith in America. He printed booklets, early editions of prayers, and the Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh; in 1910 he founded and started printing the first Bahá'í monthly publication, *Star of the West* . In its early years this publication carried a Persian section. The *Star of the West* was circulated in the Orient and thus served to bring the oriental and occidental Bahá'ís into close contact. He gathered and published the well-known three volumes of Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from Tablets written to the Bahá'ís in North America. He also assisted Howard MacNutt in publishing the addresses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá delivered in the United States and Canada, in 1912, under the title Promulgation of Universal Peace. Albert also helped in the compilation and publication of the first five volumes of The Bahá'í World for the years 1926 to 1934.

In 1931 he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to visit the Shrines of

Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb and to see the Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi. He deemed it a privilege he was chosen by Shoghi Effendi to carry to the Holy Land the twenty original Tablets of the Báb reproduced in Shoghi Effendi's translation of *The Dawn-Breakers* , published in 1932.

Albert, from the moment he heard of the Bahá'í Faith, was active in spreading it in America. He was a deep student of the Writings, an able speaker, a profound teacher of the Laws and Ordinances. His classes on the Covenant and Bahá'í Administration were most helpful both to newcomers and Bahá'ís of long association with the Faith. There was a freshness and vigor in his teaching; he radiated a love that reached the hearts. In his every-day life he demonstrated the power of the revealed Word of Bahá'u'lláh.

Albert Robert Windust will long be remembered. The inspiration of his faith and devotion has without doubt moved a great many souls into the orbit of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Here was a man who was truly a channel of a great spiritual force – it shone in his countenance. Its radiance was felt by all who knew him and its influence spread to all with whom he came in contact.

Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1930, during Queen Marie of Romania's visit to Egypt, the "Rumanian Minister in Cairo wired Shoghi Effendi: 'Her Majesty regrets that not passing through Palestine she will not be able to visit you.'"

Published on: March 26, 2026

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From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum 's book *The Priceless Pearl* , titled " Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania "...

> In 1930 her Majesty visited Egypt with her daughter Ileana . Shoghi Effendi, having had the unfortunate experience of indiscreet publicity during her visit to Cyprus, wired Alexandria on 19 February: "Advise Assembly in case Queen visits Egypt convey only written expression of welcome and appreciation on behalf Bahá'ís. Letter should be briefly carefully worded. No objection sending flowers. Individual communications should be strictly avoided. Inform Cairo."
>
> In the hope that at last the Queen would be able to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places in Palestine the Guardian had had Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to her grandmother, Queen Victoria , copied in fine Persian calligraphy, and illuminated in Tehran. On 21 February he cabled Tehran: "Illuminated Tablet Queen Victoria should reach Haifa not later than March tenth on one or several pages." This was to be his gift to Her Majesty. Hearing no news of the Queen's plans once she had reached Egypt he wired to her direct on 8 March: "Her Majesty, the Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania , abroad Mayflower, Aswan. Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty

and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit His home in Haifa. Your Majesty 's acceptance to visit Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine and prison-city of 'Akka will apart from its historic significance be a source of immeasurable strength joy and hope to the silent sufferers of the Faith throughout the East. Our fondest love, prayers and best wishes for Your Majesty 's happiness and welfare."

Receiving no reply to this communication Shoghi Effendi sent another wire on 26 March to the Queen at the Hotel Semiramis in Cairo: "Fearing my former letter and telegram in which Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá joined me in extending invitation to Your Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana may have miscarried, we are pleased to express anew the pleasure it would give us all should Your Majesty find it feasible to visit Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Shrines and the prison-city of 'Akka. Deeply regret unauthorized publicity given by the Press." Two days later the Rumanian Minister in Cairo wired Shoghi Effendi: " Her Majesty regrets that not passing through Palestine she will not be able to visit you."

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter , Princess Ileana of Romania , disputes this claim :

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II , one of Samoa 's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston , who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas .

Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1911, William Sears, later a Hand of the Cause, was born. He wrote "Thief in the Night," which ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of Christian prophecy, particularly based on Seventh-day Adventist literature and the teachings of Baptist preacher William Miller.

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March 28. On this date in 1911, William Sears , later named a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi in 1957, was born in Duluth, Minnesota. A popular radio and television personality, he is perhaps best know for writing the best-selling book, *Thief in the Night* , which ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of Christian prophecy, particularly based on Seventh-day Adventist literature and the teachings of Baptist preacher William Miller . It has been reprinted over twenty times by George Ronald Publisher , an official publishing house of the Bahá'ís Administrative Order .

William Miller , a Baptist preacher, predicted that on October 22, 1844, Christ would return to the Earth. Although the prophecy was not fulfilled, leading to what was called the Great Disappointment , the Millerites would go on to form the various Adventist churches .

Thief in the Night , argues that Miller's interpretation of biblical prophecies for the signs and dates of the coming of Jesus were correct and fulfilled by the Báb who declared that he was the "Promised One" on May 23, 1844, and began openly teaching in Iran in October 1844.

What is interesting about these events in general is the manner in which individuals react. In the classic work of social psychology, *When Prophecy Fails,* Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken, and Stanley Schachter studied a small UFO religion in Chicago called the Seekers that believed in an imminent apocalypse. They describe the coping mechanisms after the event did not occur, and their findings have been generally applicable to a wide variety of scenarios involving cognitive dissonance and true-

believer syndrome.

Festinger describes the basic hypotheses of cognitive dissonance as follows (page 3):

1. The existence of dissonance [or inconsistency], being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance [or consistency].
2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.

Festinger and his co-authors conclude that the following conditions lead to increased conviction in beliefs following disconfirmation (page 4):

1. The belief must be held with deep conviction and be relevant to the believer's actions or behavior.
2. The belief must have produced actions that are difficult to undo.
3. The belief must be sufficiently specific and concerned with the real world such that it can be clearly disconfirmed.
4. The disconfirmatory evidence must be recognized by the believer.
5. The believer must have social support from other believers.

Festinger describes the increased conviction and proselytizing by cult members after disconfirmation as a specific instantiation of cognitive dissonance (i.e., increased proselyting reduced dissonance by producing the knowledge that others also accepted their beliefs) and its application to understanding complex mass phenomena. (pages 252-259)

When Prophecy Fails was published in 1957, the year that Shoghi Effendi died without having written a will as prescribed in Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Aqdas and without having designated a successor Guardian as stipulated in `Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament .

From the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paragraph 109 "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will. The testator should head this document with the adornment of the

Most Great Name, bear witness therein unto the oneness of God in the Dayspring of His Revelation, and make mention, as he may wish, of that which is praiseworthy, so that it may be a testimony for him in the kingdoms of Revelation and Creation and a treasure with his Lord, the Supreme Protector, the Faithful."

From The Will And Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Part One, page 12 "O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—“The child is the secret essence of its sire,” that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another branch to succeed him."

Comments

No comments.

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From the compilation titled "Holocaust, the Greater Plan of God, and the Destiny of the Jewish People" , originally published in *The Promised Day Is Come* , under the heading "A Warning Unto All Nations" ...

> Islám , at once the progenitor and persecutor of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, is, if we read aright the signs of the times, only beginning to sustain the impact of this invincible and triumphant Faith. We need only recall the nineteen hundred years of abject misery and dispersion which they , who only for the short space of three years persecuted the Son of God , have had to endure, and are still enduring. We may well ask ourselves, with mingled feelings of dread and awe, how severe must be the tribulations of those who, during no less than fifty years, have, "at every moment tormented with a fresh torment" Him Who is the Father , and who have, in addition, made His Herald --Himself a Manifestation of God--to quaff, in such tragic circumstances, the cup of martyrdom.
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> (28 March 1941, written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of the World, published in The Promised Day Is Come (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 99-100)

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> (From a letter dated March 28, 1953 to an individual believer)

Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...ornamentation of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, the most hallowed Temple ever to be erected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, and the crowning glory of the first Bahá'í century, is an event of unique and transcendental significance."

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FOUNDATION STONE LAID BY THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

> **The completion of the exterior ornamentation of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette, the most hallowed Temple ever to be erected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, and the crowning glory of the first Bahá'í century, is an event of unique and transcendental significance.** Neither the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, reared in the city of Ishqabad, nor any House of Worship to be raised in succeeding centuries, can claim to possess **the vast, the immeasurable potentialities with which this Mother Temple of the West, established in the very heart of so enviable a continent, and whose foundation stone has been laid by the hand of the Center of the Covenant Himself, has been endowed.** Conceived forty years ago by that little band of far-sighted and resolute disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, members of the first Bahá'í community established in the Western Hemisphere; blessed and fostered by a vigilant Master Who directed its course from the hour of its inception to the last days of His life; supported by the spontaneous contributions of Bahá'ís poured in from the five

continents of the globe, this noble, this mighty, this magnificent enterprise deserves to rank among the immortal epics that have adorned the annals of the Apostolic Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

The debt of gratitude owed by the entire Bahá'í world to its champion-builders is indeed immeasurable. The admiration which this brilliant exploit has evoked in the breasts of countless followers of the Faith in East and West knows no bounds. The creative energies its completion must unleash are incalculable. The role it is destined to play in hastening the emergence of the world order of Bahá'u'lláh, now stirring in the womb of this travailing age, cannot as yet be fathomed. We stand too close to so majestic, so lofty, so radiant, so symbolic a monument raised so heroically to the glory of the Most Great Name, at so critical a stage in human history, and at so significant a spot in a continent so richly endowed, to be able to visualize the future glories which the consummation of this institution, this harbinger of an as yet unborn civilization, must in the fulness of time disclose to the eyes of all mankind.

That so laborious, so meritorious an undertaking has been completed a year before its appointed time is a further cause for rejoicing and gratitude, and an added testimony to the vision, the resourcefulness, and enterprising spirit of the American believers.

No need, however, to dwell at length on their past achievements, remarkable and exemplary though they have been, nor is this the time to expatiate on the superb spirit that has characterized their stewardship in the service of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. **Tasks of extreme urgency, of great magnitude, of the utmost significance await** them in this concluding year of the first Bahá'í century, and at this hour of great peril, of stress and trial for all mankind. The sacred--the pressing, the inescapable teaching responsibilities assumed under the Seven Year Plan must be resolutely faced as befits those whose record has shed so brilliant a light on the annals of the first Bahá'í century. The consolidation of each and every nucleus, formed so painstakingly in every republic of Central and South

America, the formation of a Bahá'í Assembly in every virgin State and Province in the North American Continent, call for undivided attention, for further heroism, for a concerted, a persistent, a herculean effort on the part of the stalwart builders of that bounteous Edifice which posterity will recognize as the greatest shrine in the Western world.

Nor must the elaborate preparations in connection with the forthcoming celebration of the centenary of our glorious Faith be overlooked or neglected, if we would befittingly consummate this first, this most fecund, century of the Bahá'í era. An unprecedented, a carefully conceived, efficiently co-ordinated, nation-wide campaign, aiming at the proclamation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, through speeches, articles in the press, and radio broadcasts, should be promptly initiated and vigorously prosecuted. The universality of the Faith, its aims and purposes, episodes in its dramatic history, testimonials to its transforming power, and the character and distinguishing features of its World Order should be emphasized and explained to the general public, and particularly to eminent friends and leaders sympathetic to its cause, who should be approached and invited to participate in the celebrations. Lectures, conferences, banquets, special publications should, to whatever extent is practicable and according to the resources at the disposal of the believers, proclaim the character of this joyous Festival. An all-American Convention, at which representatives of Bahá'í centers in every Republic in Central and South America will be invited to participate, and to which, for the first time, all isolated believers, all groups, and all communities already possessing local Spiritual Assemblies will have the right to appoint delegates and to share in the election of the National Spiritual Assembly, will, moreover, have to be held to commemorate this epoch-making event. A dedication ceremony, in consonance with the solemnity of the occasion, and held beneath the dome of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, on the very day and at the very hour of the Báb's historic Declaration, followed by a public session, consecrated to the memory of both the Báb and `Abdu'l-Bahá, should constitute the leading features of this historic Convention.

For it should be borne in mind that in the year 1944 we celebrate not only the termination of the first century of the Bahá'í Era, but also the centenary of the birth of the Bahá'í Dispensation, of the inception of the Bahá'í cycle, and the birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and commemorate as well the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Bahá'í Faith in the Western world.

No effort, nor any sacrifice can be deemed too great to insure the decisive, the brilliant success of the celebrations which this historic year, of such manifold significance, must witness. He Who in the past has, in diverse ways and on so many occasions, graciously and unfailingly guided, blessed and sustained the members of this privileged community will, no doubt, continue to aid and inspire them to carry to a victorious conclusion the unfinished tasks which still confront them, and will enable them to crown their labors in a manner that will befit their high destiny.

March 28, 1943

Comments

No comments.

March 28. On this date in 1998, an article in the Los Angeles Times stated "Members can be found in more than 200 countries. In Ventura County, the membership is small but it's growing and has gained acceptance. Queen Marie of Romania was a Bahai." Queen Marie's daughter Ileana disputes this claim

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While Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim :

> "It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

Bahai Faith a Celebration of Diversity

By BRENDA LOREE

Los Angeles Times

Saturday, March 28, 1998

Bahai Faith a Celebration of Diversity Beliefs:

Members can be found in more than 200 countries. In Ventura County, the

membership is small but it's growing and has gained acceptance.

Queen Marie of Romania was a Bahai. Dizzy Gillespie was too. So are Seals and Croft.

The very diversity of those personalities exemplifies the Bahai faith, which is about embracing diversity, adherents say. The Bahai faith, which is represented in more than 200 countries, is the world's second-most widespread religion, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica. Only Christians are more globally far-flung. While Ventura County Bahais, numbering just under 500, aren't as numerous as members of more mainstream religions, they meet all over the region.

The apostrophe in some spelling variations of Baha'i gives a hint of the faith's origins--Baha'i is an Arabic word. Early Baha'is came from Persia, and the apostrophe translates to "follower of." A Bahai is a follower of Baha'u'luh, a Persian nobleman who founded the faith in 1844, said Dorothy Gibson, a member of the sizable Thousand Oaks Bahai community.

A 35-member Bahai community meets in Fillmore every 19 days, an interval based on the Bahai calendar year of 19 months of 19 days each.

Fillmore Bahai Brian Fitzpatrick explained his beliefs: "First of all, Bahais believe in the unity of mankind. We all share the same planet, so there is one race--the human race. We believe there is only one God, so we believe there is but one religion--God's religion." But Bahais accept all the world's religions as God's religions, Fitzpatrick said. "We think all religions teach the same basic tenets. Every religion has a golden rule and tells us to be charitable and humble."

Ventura member MaryLou Vige agreed: "We feel mankind is one. The differences in race and religion don't matter. Being good neighbors is what matters."

A typical Bahai service, held in a member's home, includes a short devotional or prayer reading and a planning session, followed by a social hour, said Thousand Oaks assembly member Douglas Gibson. Jan Dietrick, one of about 50 Bahais in the city of Ventura, teaches primer classes on the faith.

"It's such an all-encompassing set of beliefs, and thus a challenge to boil it down," Dietrick said about the classes, which are a survey of the faith distilled to four one-hour talks.

Individual Bahai communities come together annually in a prayerful way and elect a nine-member committee to guide the community that year, Dietrick said.

"Our faith has no paid clergy--no authoritative figure," Dietrick said.

"Our teachings say that in this modern age we have the means to print sacred writings and the means to teach everyone to read--they don't need an interpreter.

"A fundamental principle of Bahai teachings is to independently investigate the truth," she said. "Search out for yourself what is the right thing from all the information you can gather." Such beliefs are why the Bahais in Iran were imprisoned and killed after Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979. When Cliff and MaryLou Vige came to Ventura County from Illinois in 1951, they felt like outcasts, they said.

"There were only five Bahais in the county at that time, all in Santa Paula," said MaryLou Vige. "So we've really grown, Bahai-wise.

"But when we first came here, people thought we were cultists," she said. "The local newspaper refused to print our ads. At that time, people weren't open to anything different."

She feels the atmosphere has changed. "And I think that today, people are hungry for something that satisfies their souls." March 20 was a special day in the Bahai calendar: New Year's Day or Naw Ruz. Bahais all over the world gathered for a prayer for mankind and a festive potluck New Year's feast.

And on Friday, a 30-minute video on Bahai beliefs, titled "The Power of Race Unity," began airing on local cable television shows and on the national Odyssey Channel. It will run through the end of April. Said Simi Valley Bahai John Bruton: "Bahais don't have all the answers. But we hope 'The Power of Race Unity' will stimulate discussion among families and leaders of Ventura County to recognize our diversity, accept it as a strength and take actions to promote unity and understanding."

FYI: Jan Dietrick's classes will be held Tuesdays through April 14 at 7:30 p.m. at 1889 Montgomery Ave., Ventura. Call Pete Quick at 659-4660 for information.

Comments

No comments.

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> THE PROMISED DAY IS COME
>
> Friends and fellow-heirs of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh:
>
> **A tempest, unprecedented in its violence, unpredictable in its course, catastrophic in its immediate effects, unimaginably glorious in its ultimate consequences, is at present sweeping the face of the earth.** Its driving power is remorselessly gaining in range and momentum. Its cleansing force, however much undetected, is increasing with every passing day. Humanity, gripped in the clutches of its devastating power, is smitten by the evidences of its resistless fury. It can neither perceive its origin, nor probe its significance, nor discern its outcome. Bewildered, agonized and helpless, it watches this great and mighty wind of God invading the remotest and fairest regions of the earth, rocking its foundations, deranging its equilibrium, sundering its nations, disrupting the homes of its peoples, wasting its cities, driving into exile its kings, pulling down its bulwarks, uprooting its institutions, dimming its light, and harrowing up the souls of its inhabitants.

"The time for the destruction of the world and its people," Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic pen has proclaimed, "hath arrived." "The hour is approaching," He specifically affirms, "when the most great convulsion will have appeared." "The promised day is come, the day when tormenting trials will have surged above your heads, and beneath your feet, saying: 'Taste ye what your hands have wrought!'" "Soon shall the blasts of His chastisement beat upon you, and the dust of hell enshroud you." And again: "And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake." "The day is approaching when its [civilization's] flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: `The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the All-Praised!'" "The day will soon come," He, referring to the foolish ones of the earth, has written, "whereon they will cry out for help and receive no answer." "The day is approaching," He moreover has prophesied, "when the wrathful anger of the Almighty will have taken hold of them. He, verily, is the Omnipotent, the All-Subduing, the Most Powerful. He shall cleanse the earth from the defilement of their corruption, and shall give it for an heritage unto such of His servants as are nigh unto Him."

"As to those who deny Him Who is the Sublime Gate of God," the Báb, for His part, has affirmed in the Qayyúm-i-Asmá' , "for them We have prepared, as justly decreed by God, a sore torment. And He, God, is the Mighty, the Wise." And further, "O peoples of the earth! I swear by your Lord! Ye shall act as former generations have acted. Warn ye, then, yourselves of the terrible, the most grievous vengeance of God. For God is, verily, potent over all things." And again: "By My glory! I will make the infidels to taste, with the hands of My power, retributions unknown of anyone except Me, and will waft over the faithful those musk-scented breaths which I have nursed in the midmost heart of My throne."

Dear friends! **The powerful operations of this titanic upheaval are**

comprehensible to none except such as have recognized the claims of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Their followers know full well whence it comes, and what it will ultimately lead to. Though ignorant of how far it will reach, they clearly recognize its genesis, are aware of its direction, acknowledge its necessity, observe confidently its mysterious processes, ardently pray for the mitigation of its severity, intelligently labor to assuage its fury, and anticipate, with undimmed vision, the consummation of the fears and the hopes it must necessarily engender.

Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 2006, Ruth Katherine Meyer passed away. She had been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to Margarita Island in 1953.

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 29. On this date in 2006, Ruth Katherine Meyer passed away. She had been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to Margarita Island in 1953. " Knight of Bahá'u'lláh " was a title conferred to Bahá'ís who introduced the Bahá'í Faith to new territories during the Ten Year Crusade .

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island , both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands , also part of the Realm of New Zealand , are Knightless.

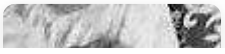
Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands . Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.



Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "should a believer read the writings of Covenant-breakers ... and permit these words to instill doubts about the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause such a believer would then be considered as having been infected by the poison of Covenant-breaking."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 29. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer stating "It is true that should a believer read the writings of Covenant-breakers or enemies of the Cause and permit these words to instill doubts about the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause such a believer would then be considered as having been infected by the poison of Covenant-breaking."

> It is true that should a believer read the writings of Covenant-breakers or enemies of the Cause and permit these words to instill doubts about the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause such a believer would then be considered as having been infected by the poison of Covenant-breaking. However, since you returned the book to your local library upon being informed of the true nature of its contents and told your District Teaching Committee and your National Spiritual Assembly about the matter, it is clear that you took the correct steps and should therefore, with complete confidence, turn to Bahá'u'lláh for protection and guidance, fully assured that His promise to assist those who turn to Him will be fulfilled."
>
> (From a letter dated 29 March 1977 to an individual believer)

Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1999, the UHJ wrote all NSAs announcing the "establishing a Chair for Baha'i Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem...Three years ago, Professor Moshe Sharon began to teach the History and Sacred Literature of the Baha'i Faith, on a regular basis, at the..."

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> Chair for Baha'i Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
>
> 29 March 1999
>
> To National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> Dear Baha'i Friends,
>
> We are happy to announce that documents were signed today establishing a Chair for Baha'i Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After visiting the Shrine of the Bab, the University's President and Rector, together with other senior officers and representatives of the Baha'i World Centre, took part in a brief private ceremony. The signature and exchange of documents concluded discussions initiated by the University nearly a year ago. In the introduction to its formal proposal for the establishment of the Chair, the University thus explained its motivation:
>
> Three years ago, Professor Moshe Sharon began to teach the History and

Sacred Literature of the Baha'i Faith, on a regular basis, at the Institute of Asian and African Studies in the Faculty of Humanities of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. As a result of Professor Sharon 's pioneering work, the University has become convinced of the importance of the field and of the need to provide an institutional basis for the continuation and development of this work on both the teaching and research levels.

It is noteworthy that in 1925, when the University was being established, the beloved Guardian wrote a letter of warm encouragement to its founders, since which time it has achieved world renown.

We offer thanksgiving at the Holy Threshold for this unanticipated manifestation of Baha'u'llah's ceaseless bounties.

With loving Baha'i greetings,

[SIGNED: THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE]

Moshe Sharon was born in Haifa on December 18, 1937. He joined the faculty of Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1965 and would go on to earn a Ph.D. at the same institution in 1971. He served as an Arab Affairs adviser to Prime Minister Menachem Begin and served in the Ministry of Defense, during which took part in the negotiations for peace with Egypt. Sharon established the Centre of Jewish Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, which he directed while serving as director of the World Zionist Organization branch in Johannesburg. In 1999 he was appointed to the chair of Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University. Sharon serves as a policy expert for the Ariel Center for Policy Research. He and his wife, Judy, have six children.

Moshe Sharon has written about early Islamic history and the development of Shia Islam. He is a specialist in Arabic epigraphy and papyrology, with his opus being *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae* . In 2005 he published the first translation into Hebrew of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and included a study of the history and theology of the religion.

Frequently interviewed by Israeli media, he has been called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar." Among his political views is that there is "no possibility of peace between Israel and the Palestinians whatsoever, for ever" and that peace agreements

with Arabs are "pieces of paper, parts of tactics, strategies...with no meaning." Moshe Sharon opposed the Oslo peace accords and believes the dismantling the Israeli settlements, which he terms "expulsions," serve to "increase the appetite of the other side and only achieve the killing of Jews." He blames the Bosnians' being Muslim for the Yugoslav conflict of the 1990's and argues that "The only way to avoid military confrontation with Iran is to leave this military confrontation to powers bigger than Israel."

In the Israeli documentary film "Bahais in My Backyard," during an interview, Moshe Sharon denies the existence of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants in Israel. Despite Sharon's denial of the existence of such relatives, they do exist, and one of Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughters, Nigar Bahai Amsalem, is featured in the film . The denial of these descendants, no less by a purported academic who is "Chair of Bahá'í Studies" at arguably Israel's best university, is curious.

Moshe Sharon has close connections with the Bahá'í Administrative Order. For example, in December 2000, Moshe Sharon and Hossain Danesh , the Rector of the now-defunct Landegg Academy , a Bahá'í-sponsored institution of higher education in Switzerland, co-convened the First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths at Hebrew University. The conference was covered in a Bahá'í World News Service article .

> JERUSALEM — Some 54 scholars of religion -- Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Mormon and Baha'i-- gathered in December at the Hebrew University to discuss the impact of modernism on their traditions. The conference, co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities and Landegg Academy , has advanced Baha'i studies as an independent field of academic study and enriched the dialogue on the core values common to the monotheistic faiths.
>
> The First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, was held from 17 to 21 December 2000 and focused on common approaches within Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Baha'i Faith

toward the philosophical, social and psychological challenges of modernity.

"Religious studies often deal with the origins or history of religions. For example we study the origins of Islam or medieval Judaism," said Yair Zakovitch , Dean of the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities. "But the study of religion in modern times is so relevant, so important to the lives of people. It was very significant that these scholars, despite the delicate political situation, were able to gather in Jerusalem to discuss their commonalities and appreciate their differences. People are generally suspicious, and the walls of suspicion collapsed."

The President of the Hebrew University, Menachem Magidor , described to the conference participants his vision of making the Hebrew University into a preeminent center for the study of religion, with research centers devoted to each of the monotheistic faiths. "The Chair in Baha'i Studies is the first link in this chain," he said.

Moshe Sharon , the holder of the Chair in Baha'i Studies and co-convenor of the conference, said that the field of Baha'i studies is emerging as an independent area of academic inquiry and that this was the first conference convened by a major international university for the study of the Baha'i Faith and its relationship to its sister faiths.

"Through this conference," said Dr. Sharon , "the Hebrew University has declared its interest in Baha'i studies and its recognition of the importance of this field alongside Jewish, Christian and Islamic studies."

The other co-convenor of the conference was Hossain Danesh , the Rector of Landegg Academy , a Baha'i-sponsored institution of higher education in Switzerland.

"The conference focused on fundamental issues that are common to religions, held in a city and at a time when religious conflict in political terms was considerable," Dr. Danesh said.

In his keynote address Dr. Danesh reviewed the common elements of the monotheistic religions that have made them cornerstones of civilizations,

as well as some of the teachings and principles of the Baha'i Faith that address challenges unique to the modern age. He presented President Magidor with a volume of fine pen and ink drawings of Baha'i holy places in the Old City of Acre by the Persian architect and draftsman Hushang Seyhoun .

Other presentations and panel discussions were grouped around themes such as "Religion in Modern Times: Philosophical, Social and Psychological Reflections," "Mysticism and Messianism," "Eschatology and Ethics," "Tradition, Renewal and Reform," and "Religion and the Realm of Science." Most of the panelists spoke on aspects of Judaism or the Baha'i Faith, but there were also contributions on Sufism, the Wahhabi movement, modern Islam, and Mormonism.

The participants came mainly from the United States and Israel, but also from Canada, Denmark, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Prof. Degui Cai from China's Shandong University gave a presentation on the fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith and their relevance to Chinese society.

The final panel discussion, on "Contemporary Meeting of Ultimate Differences," featured presentations about African Christians in Israel and about the Baha'i Faith, Christianity and indigenous religions in the Pacific islands. The panel closed with a presentation by Dr. Amnon Netzer of the Hebrew University on "The Jews and the Baha'i Faith." A Jew of Iranian background, Prof. Netzer spoke about the conditions that led as many as ten percent of Iran's Jews to convert to the Baha'i Faith.

"The courteous talk, in which Dr. Netzer showed great respect for those who converted, created an atmosphere of interfaith reconciliation for the audience, which included several Israeli Jews with Baha'i relatives," said Robert Stockman , Coordinator of the Institute for Baha'i Studies in Wilmette, Illinois.

Another significant element of the conference was the participation of many young scholars alongside well-known and outstanding professors and

scholars in the field of religious studies.

"The juxtaposition of youth and experience was very insightful and promising for the future of religious studies. It demonstrated that there are fine minds coming up, and this augurs well for the emergence of new insights into the role of religion in the development of civilization," said Dr. Danesh said.

The conference also featured a number of cultural activities. The opening day closed with a program of classical music by the King David String Ensemble, one of the foremost chamber music groups in Israel. Among the selections they performed was a piece well known to Baha'is, "Dastam Bigir Abdu'l-Baha," which the composer had arranged especially for the occasion.

Kiu Haghighi , a Persian Baha'i and master of the santour, closed the conference with a virtuoso performance of an original piece he composed for the event.

On the final day of the conference, 21 December, the participants made a special trip to the Baha'i World Center in Haifa and Acre. They visited the Shrine of the Bab and toured the nearly completed garden terraces stretching above and below the Shrine on the slopes of Mount Carmel. After a luncheon at the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, they visited the Shrine of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i holy places in Acre.

A compilation of articles based on the proceedings of the conference will be published during the coming year, and many of the papers will be made available through the Landegg Academy Web site, www.landegg.org .

The Hebrew University and Landegg Academy have agreed to sponsor annual conferences of this nature, with the venue alternating between Jerusalem and the Landegg campus in Wienacht, Switzerland. The overarching theme of this series of conferences will be "Religion and Science." The next conference is planned for late January 2002 at Landegg.

The Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University was established in

1999 as the first academic chair in the world devoted to the study of the Baha'i Faith. Other academic centers and programs, most notably the Baha'i Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, have been established to study Baha'i perspectives on and contributions to other academic disciplines.

"The systematic study of Baha'i religion, history and literature was introduced into the Hebrew University in the 1990s," wrote Prof. Sharon in the published proceedings of the dedication ceremonies for the Baha'i Chair, held at Mount Scopus and at the Baha'i World Center in Haifa in June 1999.

"The magnitude of the material involved, and the vast scope of research which has already been done in the field persuaded the University of the necessity of creating a proper framework for research and teaching designed to accommodate the future development of the field within the academic vision of the University of forming a cluster of research centers dedicated to the study of the major religions of the world."

Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1987, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "concerning the treatment of Covenant-breakers in the writing of Bahá'í history."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 29. On this date in 1987, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "concerning the treatment of Covenant-breakers in the writing of Bahá'í history."

Covenant-Breakers in Bahá'í Historiography by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice published in Bahá'í Studies Bulletin, 5:3-6:1, pages 138-9 1991-06 June 17, 1987 Dear Bahá'í Friend: Your letter of 29 March 1987 concerning the treatment of Covenant-breakers in the writing of Bahá'í history was received by the Universal House of Justice and we have been asked to convey its reply.

Bahá'í historians have the obligation to present the truth in their works on the Faith and they should not distort history by avoiding treatment of Covenant-breakers when this is called for. Even so, as Bahá'ís they will want to exercise great care in determining what may be necessary for them to read from the writings of Covenant-breakers to satisfy the requirements of their research.

To read the writings of Covenant-breakers is not forbidden to the believers and does not constitute in itself an act of Covenant- breaking. Indeed, some of the Bahá'ís have the unpleasant duty to read such literature as part of their responsibilities for protecting the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. However, the friends are warned in strongest terms against reading such literature because Covenant-breaking is a spiritual poison and the calumnies and distortions of the truth which the Covenant-breakers give out are such that they can undermine the faith of the believer and plant the seeds of doubt unless he is forearmed with an unshakable belief in Bahá'u'lláh and His Covenant and a knowledge of the true facts. This is a factor that any Bahá'í doing research into the history of the Faith must bear in mind, and he must himself decide, whenever he comes upon such documents, whether he feels justified in reading them for the purposes of his research.

In a letter dated 30 May 1972 to an individual believer, who had raised questions similar to yours, the House of Justice wrote:

We have received your letter... concerning your request that, in connection with your studies and vocation, you be permitted to study books written by Covenant-breakers of the past. If you consider that reading such books is necessary for the purposes of your study and future work, you should have no feeling of guilt in reading them.

The House of Justice appreciates the efforts being made by serious scholars to present the history of the Faith in its various aspects and will pray at the Holy Shrines that your part in such efforts may be confirmed by the Blessed Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, For the Department of the Secretariat

Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no time to lose. The hour is ripe for the proclamation...of the One Message that can alone extricate humanity from the morass into which it is steadily sinking..."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 29. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no time to lose. The hour is ripe for the proclamation, without fear, without reserve, and without hesitation, and on a scale never as yet undertaken, of the One Message that can alone extricate humanity from the morass into which it is steadily sinking, and from which they who claim to be the followers of the Most Great Name can and will eventually rescue it."

> One Message That Can Extricate Humanity
>
> 29 MARCH 1945
>
> The Divine Plan conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the American Bahá'í community, in the midst of one of the darkest periods in human history, and with which the destinies of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the North American continent must for generations to come remain inextricably interwoven, has, during the concluding years of the first Bahá'í Century, triumphantly emerged from the first stage of its evolution. Its initiation, officially and on a vast scale, had, for well nigh twenty years, been held in abeyance, while the processes of a slowly emerging Administrative Order, were, under the unerring guidance of Providence, creating and perfecting the agencies for its efficient and systematic prosecution. The next stage in the evolution of the Plan cannot, however, be embarked upon, until the external causes, hampering its further unfoldment in other continents of the globe, are removed through the cessation of hostilities and the signal victories already won through its initial development are sufficiently

consolidated throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The tasks confronting those who have so valiantly and brilliantly inaugurated the first stage in the execution of the Great Design unfolded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the promulgation of the Faith of His Father, during this transitional period, are manifold, exacting, urgent, and sacred. The local administrative units, so laboriously constituted throughout the Americas, must needs, as already pointed out and repeatedly stressed, be maintained, reinforced, closely integrated and their number steadily multiplied. The spirit that has inflamed the pioneers who have set the seal of triumph on the Seven Year Plan , must under the vigilant care of the National representatives of the American Bahá'í community be constantly watched, kept alive and nourished. The literature of the Faith, particularly in Spanish and Portuguese, must be widely disseminated in both Central and South America, as a necessary adjunct to the systematic consolidation of the work that has been undertaken. Above all, the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh must, during the opening years of the second Bahá'í Century, and through the instrumentality of an already properly functioning Administrative Order, whose ramifications have been extended to the four corners of the Western Hemisphere, be vividly, systematically brought to the attention of the masses, in their hour of grief, misery and confusion. A more audacious assertion of the challenging verities of the Faith; a more convincing presentation of its distinguishing truths; a fuller exposition of the character, the aims, and the achievements of its rising Administrative system, as the nucleus and pattern of its future world-embracing order; a more direct and intimate contact and association with the leaders of public thought whose activities and aims are akin to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, for the purpose of demonstrating the universality, the comprehensiveness, the liberality and the dynamic power of His Divine Message; a closer scrutiny of the ways and means whereby its claims can be vindicated, its defamers and detractors silenced, and its institutions safeguarded; a more determined effort to exploit, to the fullest extent possible, the talents and abilities of the rank and file of the believers for the purpose of achieving

these ends-these stand out as the paramount tasks summoning to a challenge, during these years of transition and turmoil, the entire body of the American believers. The facilities which the Radio and Press furnish must be utilized to a degree unprecedented in American Bahá'í history. The combined resources of the much-envied, exemplary American Bahá'í community must be harnessed for the effectual promotion of these meritorious purposes. Blessings, undreamt of in their scope and plenteousness, are bound to be vouchsafed to those who will, in these dark yet pregnant times, arise to further these noble ends, and to hasten through their acts the hour at which a still more momentous stage in the evolution of a Divine and worldwide Plan can be launched.

There is no time to lose. The hour is ripe for the proclamation, without fear, without reserve, and without hesitation, and on a scale never as yet undertaken, of the One Message that can alone extricate humanity from the morass into which it is steadily sinking, and from which they who claim to be the followers of the Most Great Name can and will eventually rescue it. The sooner they who labor for the recognition and triumph of His Faith in the New World arise to carry out these inescapable duties, the sooner will the hopes, the aims and objectives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as enshrined in His own Plan , be translated from the realm of vision to the plane of actuality and manifest the full force of the potentialities with which they have been endowed.

Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "He referred to the return of the Jews to Palestine, and said they would first make a great contribution to the material civilization of Palestine and then eventually will (as the Master foretold) come into the Bahá'í Faith...."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 29. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "He referred to the return of the Jews to Palestine, and said they would first make a great contribution to the material civilization of Palestine and then eventually will (as the Master foretold) come into the Bahá'í Faith. There are 14 million Jews in the world and it appears they are concentrating upon Palestine and their advanced ideas and wealth will help Palestine considerably."

> *Fourth interview with our Beloved Guardian 29 March 1925*
>
> Shoghi Effendi sent for Margaret and myself . He referred to the return of the Jews to Palestine, and said they would first make a great contribution to the material civilization of Palestine and then eventually will (as the Master foretold) come into the Bahá'í Faith. There are 14 million Jews in the world and it appears they are concentrating upon Palestine and their advanced ideas and wealth will help Palestine considerably.
>
> Soheil then came to ask us to come and have our photos taken with the Arab pilgrims from Baghdad. Shoghi Effendi declined. He does not wish his photo taken since he has become Guardian of the Cause, as he does not wish any attachment to his personality.

On February 23, 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild , a member of the Rothschild banking family who was a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips

to Palestine.

On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association , an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement , proclaiming that "There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi was matriculated at Balliol College . In a letter to Marzieh Gail , Shoghi Effendi outlined his educational ambitions at Balliol College , specifically to study with eminent professors and Orientalists , noting alumni who were all Imperialists .

After 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi would continue to have close relations with the leading political administrators and prominent Zionist leaders. For example, on January 24, 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel , the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum 's *The Priceless Pearl* . As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

> While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:
>
> > Dear Mr. Rabbani,
> >
> > I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá

were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.

Yours sincerely, Herbert Samuel

On May 14, 1948, the same day as David Ben Gurion's declaration of the State of Israel , 1948, the Arab village of al-Nuqayb , where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had owned land and grown grain, was depopulated in the fighting which broke out after the U.N. General Assembly's adoption on November 29, 1947 of the Partition Plan for Palestine .

Al-Nuqayb (transliterated as Nughayb in the Bahá'í orthography) is mentioned in Lady Blomfield 's *The Chosen Highway* , in the sectioned titled *Bahá'í Villages* .

> The Master bought from time to time some land in various villages. Asfiya and Daliya, near Haifa--these two properties He bestowed upon Diya'u'llah and Badi'u'llah , the two younger half-brothers, at the request of Bahá'u'lláh .
>
> Land was also acquired in the villages of Samrih , Nughayb , and 'Adasiyyih , situated near the Jordan.

In his book *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* , the historian Walid Khalidi details the history of many of these Palestinian villages and how they were depopulated. For example, he notes that in the 1880s most of the village land of al-Samra was purchased by the Bahá'u'lláh , with the villagers continuing to farm as tenant farmers. In the 1920s, this land was sold by Shoghi Effendi to the Jewish National Fund .

Bahá'í Villages in *The Chosen Highway* chronicles in some detail how 'Abdu'l-Bahá used the grain he had grown in these villages to supply the British Army during World War I.

> We learned that when the British marched into Haifa there was some difficulty about the commissariat. The officer in command went to consult

the Master.

"I have corn," was the reply.

"But for the army?" said the astonished soldier.

"I have corn for the British Army," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

He truly walked the Mystic way with practical feet. [footnote: Lady Blomfield often recounted how the corn pits proved a safe hiding-place for the corn, during the occupation of the Turkish army. -Ed.]

According to Harry Charles Luke, an official in the British Colonial Office who served as assistant Governor of Jerusalem,

> Sir 'Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l Baha had travelled extensively in Europe and America to expound his doctrines, and on the 4th December, 1919, was created by King George V a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the Occupation.

On April 27, 1920, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ceremonially knighted, an event which was prominently reported in the Bahá'í periodical *Star of the West*.

> THE following beautiful description of this event was written by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi who was at that time in Haifa: "Among the kings and governments of the world who have become convinced that Abdul Bahá was the well-wisher and the lover of mankind are King George and his government. The King sent a medal to Abdul Bahá with the title, "Sir", thus making him a member of his household. On the 27th of April, 1920, the Governor and high officials of Haifa, Palestine presented in a beautiful garden **a most wonderful celebration for the knighting of Abdul Baha.** Bahai pilgrims from Persia, America and all parts of the world were present. Mohammedan, Christian, Jewish leaders, clergymen, notables and local officials from Haifa, Acca and other towns attended. A tent was pitched in the center of the garden. **English troops stood on both sides, from the gate of the garden to the center where Abdul Bahá was seated.** The military music added wonderful melody to the rustling leaves

of the beautiful trees. The breezes of the spring on that sunny afternoon imparted a remarkable vigor to the physical body just as the presence of Abdul Baha strengthened the souls. The Governor stood behind Abdul Bahá and, after a short speech, interpreted by Mr. Wadie Bistani, presented the medal. Then Abdul Baha, rising from his seat, gave a brief talk and a prayer for the British government.

Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "There are 14 million Jews in the world and it appears they are concentrating upon Palestine and their advanced ideas and wealth will help Palestine considerably."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 29. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "He referred to the return of the Jews to Palestine, and said they would first make a great contribution to the material civilization of Palestine and then eventually will (as the Master foretold) come into the Bahá'í Faith. There are 14 million Jews in the world and it appears they are concentrating upon Palestine and their advanced ideas and wealth will help Palestine considerably."

> *Fourth interview with our Beloved Guardian 29 March 1925*
>
> Shoghi Effendi sent for Margaret and myself. He referred to the return of the Jews to Palestine, and said they would first make a great contribution to the material civilization of Palestine and then eventually will (as the Master foretold) come into the Bahá'í Faith. There are 14 million Jews in the world and it appears they are concentrating upon Palestine and their advanced ideas and wealth will help Palestine considerably.
>
> Soheil then came to ask us to come and have our photos taken with the Arab pilgrims from Baghdad. Shoghi Effendi declined. He does not wish his photo taken since he has become Guardian of the Cause, as he does not wish any attachment to his personality.

On February 23, 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, a member of the Rothschild banking family who was a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips to Palestine.

On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association , an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement , proclaiming that "There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi was matriculated at Balliol College . In a letter to Marzieh Gail , Shoghi Effendi outlined his educational ambitions at Balliol College , specifically to study with eminent professors and Orientalists , noting alumni who were all Imperialists .

After 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi would continue to have close relations with the leading political administrators and prominent Zionist leaders. For example, on January 24, 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel , the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum 's *The Priceless Pearl* . As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

> While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:
>
> > Dear Mr. Rabbani,
> >
> > I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and

> I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.
>
> Yours sincerely, Herbert Samuel

On May 14, 1948, the same day as David Ben Gurion's declaration of the State of Israel , 1948, the Arab village of al-Nuqayb , where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had owned land and grown grain, was depopulated in the fighting which broke out after the U.N. General Assembly's adoption on November 29, 1947 of the Partition Plan for Palestine .

Al-Nuqayb (transliterated as Nughayb in the Bahá'í orthography) is mentioned in Lady Blomfield 's *The Chosen Highway* , in the sectioned titled *Bahá'í Villages* .

> The Master bought from time to time some land in various villages. Asfiya and Daliya, near Haifa--these two properties He bestowed upon Diya'u'llah and Badi'u'llah , the two younger half-brothers, at the request of Bahá'u'lláh .
>
> Land was also acquired in the villages of Samrih , Nughayb , and 'Adasiyyih , situated near the Jordan.

In his book *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* , the historian Walid Khalidi details the history of many of these Palestinian villages and how they were depopulated. For example, he notes that in the 1880s most of the village land of al-Samra was purchased by the Bahá'u'lláh , with the villagers continuing to farm as tenant farmers. In the 1920s, this land was sold by Shoghi Effendi to the Jewish National Fund .

Bahá'í Villages in *The Chosen Highway* chronicles in some detail how 'Abdu'l-Bahá used the grain he had grown in these villages to supply the British Army during World War I.

> We learned that when the British marched into Haifa there was some difficulty about the commissariat. The officer in command went to consult the Master.

"I have corn," was the reply.

"But for the army?" said the astonished soldier.

"I have corn for the British Army," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

He truly walked the Mystic way with practical feet. [footnote: Lady Blomfield often recounted how the corn pits proved a safe hiding-place for the corn, during the occupation of the Turkish army. -Ed.]

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Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Central States," which is the 3rd part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 29. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Central States*, which is the 3rd part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, outside the mansion of Bahjí, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of twelve Central States of the United States: Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> O ye heavenly souls, O ye spiritual assemblies, O ye lordly meetings:
>
> FOR some time past correspondence has been delayed, and this has been on account of the difficulty of mailing and receiving letters. But because at present a number of facilities are obtainable, therefore, I am engaged in writing you this brief epistle so that my heart and soul may obtain joy and fragrance through the remembrance of the friends. Continually this wanderer supplicates and entreats at the threshold of His Holiness the One

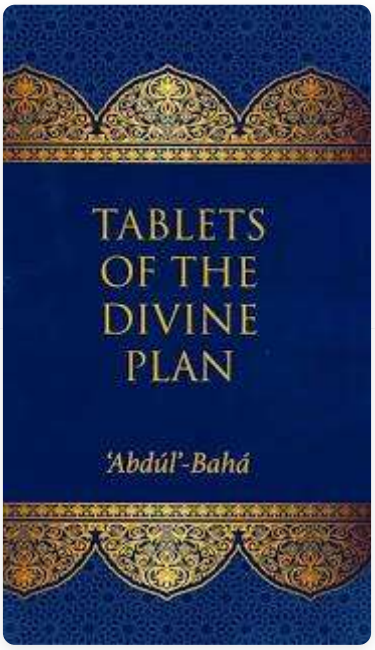
and begs assistance, bounty and heavenly confirmations in behalf of the believers. You are always in my thoughts. You are not nor shall you ever be forgotten. I hope by the favor of His Holiness the Almighty that day by day you may add to your faith, assurance, firmness and steadfastness, and become instruments for the promotion of the holy fragrances.

Although in the **states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan and Minnesota** —praise be to God—believers are found who are associating with each other in the utmost firmness and steadfastness— **day and night they have no other intention save the diffusion of the fragrances of God, they have no other hope except the promotion of the heavenly teachings** , like the candles they are burning with the light of the love of God, and like thankful birds are singing songs, spirit-imparting, joy-creating, in the rose garden of the knowledge of God— **yet in the states of Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas few of the believers exist.** So far the summons of the Kingdom of God and the proclamation of the oneness of the world of humanity has not been made in these states systematically and enthusiastically. Blessed souls and detached teachers have not traveled through these parts repeatedly; therefore these states are still in a state of heedlessness. Through the efforts of the friends of God souls must be likewise enkindled in these states, with the fire of the love of God and attracted to the Kingdom of God , so that section may also become illumined and the soul imparting breeze of the rose garden of the Kingdom may perfume the nostrils of the inhabitants. **Therefore, if it is possible, send to those parts teachers who are severed from all else save God, sanctified and pure.** If these teachers be in the utmost state of attraction, in a short time great results will be forthcoming. The sons and daughters of the kingdom are like unto the real farmers. Through whichever state or country they pass they display self-sacrifice and sow divine seeds. From that seed harvests are produced. On this subject it is revealed in the glorious Gospel: When the pure seeds are scattered in the good ground heavenly blessing and benediction is obtained. 1 I hope that

you may become assisted and confirmed, and never lose courage in the promotion of the divine teachings. Day by day may you add to your effort, exertion, and magnanimity.

Upon you be greeting and praise!

1. Cf. Matthew 13:23.



Comments

No comments.

March 29. On this date in 1996, at the Irfan Colloquia Session #9, Stephen Vaccaro presented "The Good Tree: Distinguishing the Bahá'í Faith From Destructive Cults," claiming destructive cults have five characteristics which the Bahá'í Faith does not exhibit.

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Comments

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March 30. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice's Research Department responded to concerns about the translation of an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Corinne True, who had raised concerns about the exclusion of women from the Chicago House of Justice.

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M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 30 March 1997

From: Research Department

Translation of "'Umumi" in Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá

In an email message to the Universal House of Justice dated 23 March 1997, a question has been raised concerning translation. In an undated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Mrs. True (first translated into English by Dr. Ameen Farid in July 1909) the following statement has been revealed.

According to the ordinances of the Faith of God, women are the equals of men in all rights save only that of membership on the Universal House of Justice, for as hath been stated in the text of the Book, both the head and the members of the House of Justice are men. However, in all other bodies, such as the Temple Construction Committee, the Teaching Committee, the Spiritual Assembly, and in charitable and scientific associations, women share equally in all rights with men. (Revised translation from the Persian, authorized 1987)

In the above Tablet, for the title "The Universal House of Justice" the Persian words used are: "Baytu'l-'Adl-i-'Umumi". The question has been asked, whether the translation of the word "'Umumi", as "Universal", could be a mistake, since the word has the connotation of "public" or "general" in addition to its meaning as "universal". Thus, following such an argument, the reference in the above text could perhaps be not to the "Universal House of Justice" but to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago.

The word "`umumi" as an adjective qualifying the title of the institution of the "House of Justice" appears three times in the Persian text of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.1 Shoghi Effendi's translation of this adjective is invariably "Universal" with a capital "U". The passages from the Will and Testament are as follows:2

> The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abha Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God (page 11).

And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God and daysprings of knowledge and understanding, must be steadfast in God's faith and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one. Unto this body all things must be referred (page 14).

Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant. By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be

found, after the manner of the customary elections in Western countries such as those of England (pages 19-20).

There is no doubt whatsoever that by the term "Baytu'l-'Adl-i-'Umumi", in the above-mentioned Tablet, the institution intended, whose membership is to be of men only, is none other than "The Universal House of Justice" and not the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago.

Note

1. See "Alvah-i-Vasayay-i-Mubarakiy-i-Hadrat-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Cairo: Mirza Abu'l-Qasim Gulistanih-Shirazi, 1924-25), pages 12, 15, and 21.
2. See "Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá" Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), pages 11, 14, and 19-20. Translation of "'Umumi" in Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 30 March 1997

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12. On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice .

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality . The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching .

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandaráni of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple

Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice , noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the " House of Justice " had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

> Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."
>
> (30 November 1930)

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

> 270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.
>
> "...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male .

Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U. Fareed) was the son of Mirza Assad Ullah Fareed (who authored *The School of the Prophets*) and the nephew of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wife, Munírih Khánum. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter and had been active in promoting the Bahá'í Faith. He had also received a number of Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah ."

> **Fast-Dwindling Band of Covenant-Breakers**
>
> Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years

ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith , **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih , Fareed and Falah , within the cradle of the Faith, North America and Turkey, who demonstrated varying degrees, in the course of over thirty years, of faithlessness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being **the most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate** in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.

The second, history will recognize as one of the **most perfidious among the kinsmen** of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who, **driven by ungovernable cupidity** , committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.

The third will be chiefly remembered by the **pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition** impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.

All three, however **blinded by perversity** , could not have failed to perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.

Corinne True, age 91 (right), with two of her daughters at the dedication of the completed House of Worship, Wilmette, IL, May 1, 1953.
(National Bahá'í Archives, United States)

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1937, after his marriage to Mary Maxwell, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Institution of Guardianship...now further reinforced through direct association with West and particularly with the American believers...For my part I desire to congratulate community of American believers..

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 30. On this date in 1937, after his marriage to Mary Maxwell, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Institution of Guardianship, head cornerstone of the Administrative Order of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, already ennobled through its organic connection with the Persons of Twin Founders of the Bahá'í Faith, is now further reinforced through direct association with West and particularly with the American believers, whose spiritual destiny is to usher in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. For my part I desire to congratulate community of American believers on acquisition of tie vitally binding them to so weighty an organ of their Faith."

> INSTITUTION OF GUARDIANSHIP NOW FURTHER REINFORCED
>
> Deeply moved by your message. Institution of Guardianship, head cornerstone of the Administrative Order of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, already ennobled through its organic connection with the Persons of Twin Founders of the Bahá'í Faith, is now further reinforced through direct association with West and particularly with the American believers, whose spiritual destiny is to usher in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. For my part I desire to congratulate community of American believers on acquisition of tie vitally binding them to so weighty an organ of their Faith.
>
> *Cablegram March 30, 1937*

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1980, the UHJ wrote "The picture on page 83 of William Miller's book is a portrait of Bahá'u'lláh, but different from the one displayed in the International Archives." One year later, the NSA of the U.S. wrote it "has no documentation verifying the authenticity..."

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March 30. On this date in 1980, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The picture on page 83 of William Miller 's book is a portrait of Bahá'u'lláh , but different from the one displayed in the International Archives."

One year later, on February 6, 1981, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United State wrote (also here) "We would like to point out to you that the National Spiritual Assembly has no documentation verifying the authenticity of the illustrations in Mr. William McElwee Miller 's book , and as such they cannot be regarded as being of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab."

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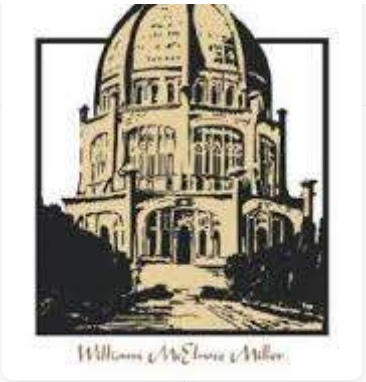
>
> *Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to an individual 6 February 1981*
>
> "The picture on page 83 of William Miller 's book is a portrait of Bahá'u'lláh , but different from the one displayed in the International Archives."
>
> *Universal House of Justice to an individual 30 March 1980*



Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote "beloved Guardian warned that the disintegrating process will penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of human society and that much suffering is in store ere mankind is fused by the fires of universal affliction into one organic commonwealth."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 30. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the beloved Guardian warned that the disintegrating process will penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of human society and that much suffering is in store ere mankind is fused by the fires of universal affliction into one organic commonwealth. Even when universal suffrage and all other rights presently sought by civil rights movements are fully attained, there still remains for the Bahá'ís the unaccomplished task of cleansing humanity, by precept and example, of every trace of racial prejudice. Nothing but the Faith of God can accomplish this."

> 456. Bahá'ís Have Task of Cleansing Humanity by Precept and Example
>
> "In many letters and on many occasions the beloved Guardian warned that the disintegrating process will penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of human society and that much suffering is in store ere mankind is fused by the fires of universal affliction into one organic commonwealth. Even when universal suffrage and all other rights presently sought by civil rights movements are fully attained, there still remains for the Bahá'ís the unaccomplished task of cleansing humanity, by precept and example, of every trace of racial prejudice. Nothing but the Faith of God can accomplish this."
>
> (From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual

Assembly of the United States, March 30, 1965: United States Supplement to Bahá'í News, No. 90, August 1965, p. 2)

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 2010, an article in "The Korea Herald" introduced the Bahá'í Faith as "a major world religion with more than 5 million followers" and quoted Firaydun Mithaq as saying "the number of the Bahá'ís in Korea is not over 200 active believers."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 30. On this date in 2010, an article in *The Korea Herald* introduced the Bahá'í Faith as "a major world religion with more than 5 million followers" and quoted Firaydun Mithaq as saying "the number of the Bahá'í in Korea is not over 200 active believers."

> This is the last part in a series looking into religion in Korea. The objective is to give expatriates a springboard from which to develop spiritually by providing the contact information. Feature articles have examined Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. -- Ed.
>
> It's a major world religion with more than 5 million followers. There are no priests. A Local Spiritual Assembly is elected. It is practiced in 127,400 locations -- including Korea -- in 802 languages. It emphasizes the unity of the major world religions. When they gather they discuss how as individuals and as a community they can contribute to building a better world as their legacy.
>
> The Bahá'í faith counts itself as another of the world`s religions with followers in Korea.
>
> Firaydun Mithaq, a member of the Bahá'í community, says that there are believers throughout the country, including in Seoul, Songnam, Anyang, Cheongju, Daegu, Gwangju, Daejeon and Busan.
>
> "Although the number of the Bahá'ís in Korea is not over 200 active

believers, the Korean Bahá'í community is composed of vibrant and dynamic members that are committed to serve the Korean society primarily in the field of education," Mithaq said. "They respect and cherish the Korean culture and exalt their religious beliefs."

Mithaq, an Australian with 18 years of experience in Korea, holds a doctorate in education and is a professor at Kyung Hee University in Seoul.

He explained that Bahá'ís in Korea worship daily at their homes and often regularly hold prayer gatherings in their administrative centers -- in Seoul, located at Huam-dong.

There are elected bodies or counsels in each city, town or village that organize and administer community religious affairs and activities. There are no rituals; in the Bahá'ís faith prayers are offered voluntarily by individuals in the gatherings.

The faith is a relatively new one, having been founded only about 150 years ago by Baha'u'llah in the middle of 19th century in Persia. (Baha'u'llah is a title given to the founder and is made up of two words: "Baha," meaning glory and "Allah," meaning God. Putting the two words together, you get "the Glory of God.")

One of the more unique things about Bahá'í is its decentralized structure. Each center, whether in Daegu, New York or London, has an elected administrative counsel that provides information, study materials and systematic study programs for inquires into the Bahá'í Faith and the needs of the Bahá'í community.

"The Bahá'í community is open to everyone and welcomes people from any religion to participate in its study gatherings, prayer meetings and important festivals.

The community meets regularly to socialize with everyone "in their gatherings with spirit of respect love and unity," explains Mithaq. They also study the Bahá'í Writings and plan programs to serve the outer community in child education, junior youth empowerment and humanitarian

community services aimed at spiritual, social and educational development.

In an e-mail interview, Kamran Eshraghian gave some important background information on Bahá'ís. He said that humanity has entered a new era of enlightenment whereby the earth's inhabitants are now challenged to draw on their collective inheritance to take up, consciously and systematically, the responsibility for the design of their future.

"Bahá'í teachings highlight that appearance of religion cannot be seen as a series of independent and random events, but rather as a single endless process, that is called 'religion' with a common source and a common purpose as the catalyst for education and advancement of humanity," he said.

Interestingly, the Bahá'í perspective says that the appearance of religion is progressive and proportional to an increasing spiritual capacity of humans as we advance.

"Over time, spiritual truth is distorted, human virtues such as truthfulness, compassion, justice, disappear. It is at this point of time a where humanity becomes in need of spiritual renewal that new religion emerges to facilitate humanity`s advancement," explained Eshraghian.

Eshraghian lives in Cheongju City, Chungcheongbuk- do. He received his Ph.D., MEngSc., and BTech., degrees from the University of Adelaide, Australia. In 2004 he received a Doctorate of Engineering from the University of Ulm, Germany, for his research in the integration of nanoelectronics with that of light wave technology. He currently serves as chairman of the board of directors of four hi-tech companies, holds an adjunct chair at UKM in Malaysia, and is a visiting scholar at University of Adelaide.

Eshraghian was a member of the auxiliary board of the Bahá'í faith in Australia from 1974 to 1985.

"Baha'u'llah compared the world community to that of the human body

being highly interconnected. Therefore Bahá'í communities in their gatherings consult and exchange ideas on issues pertaining to values, education, developments in the art of consultation, enrichment and empowerment of children and the youth through developing their understanding of virtues such as trustworthiness, truthfulness, compassion, sense of justice and practical measures that can advance the prospects for peaceful development of all peoples."

Members of democratically-elected Local Spiritual Assemblies look after the affairs of the community and can come from all strata of society such as housewives through to engineers, doctors and university professors -- all serving the community for a one year term.

The assembly operates on a consultative basis and decisions are arrived at through majority vote.

The assembly addresses the needs of the community, for example education of children, scheduling of devotional meetings, needs of elderly, and the kind of service they can offer within a neighborhood. The elected should, in Baha'u'llah's view, consider themselves responsible for the welfare of all of humankind.

What does the Bahá'í community strives for? "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established," Eshraghian quoted Baha'u'llah as saying.

"This is what the Bahá'í community strives for as they gather together in devotional meetings at homes, at Bahá'í center such in Seoul or at houses of worships in several of the continents. These gatherings are open to everyone no matter what religious back ground they may have. Holy writings from major religions are read by individuals.

"To participate effectively in the struggle to bring material well-being to humanity, the religious spirit must find ... new spiritual concepts and principles relevant to an age that seeks to establish unity and justice in human affairs. As the consequence, the Bahá'í community is closely knit in

thoughts -- and work together to developing their understanding of principles of the Bahá'í teaching that revolves around such issues as equality of women and men, harmony of science and religion, elimination of all forms of prejudice, universal education and elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty."

For more information on the Bahá'í faith, contact Kamran Eshraghian by e-mail at k.eshraghian@elabs.com.au or Firaydun Mithaq at mithaq99@gmail.com

By Matthew Lamers

(mattlamers@heraldcorp.com)

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1937, Hooper Dunbar was born in Los Angeles. He worked as an actor prior to leaving Hollywood to pioneer in 1958. In 1973 he was a founding member of the International Teaching Centre. He was elected to the UHJ in 1988, where he served until retiring in 2010.

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 30. On this date in 1937, Hooper Dunbar was born in Los Angeles. He worked as an actor prior to leaving Hollywood for Central America in 1958. Hooper Dunbar served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Nicaragua from its inception in 1961 to 1963, when he represented that Assembly at the first International Convention in Haifa, Israel. Subsequently, he was appointed as an Auxiliary Board for the Protection of the Faith in the Americas and served from 1963 to 1968, and then as a Counsellor for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith from 1968 1973, also for the Americas. He took up residence in Israel in 1973 when he was named as one of the founding members of the International Teaching Centre . Mr. Dunbar served as a member of that institution for fifteen years, until he was elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1988 and retired from that body in 2010.

His career is typical for individuals in the Bahá'í hierarchy, whether in an elected office or in an appointed offce from which the higher elected officials invariably come from.

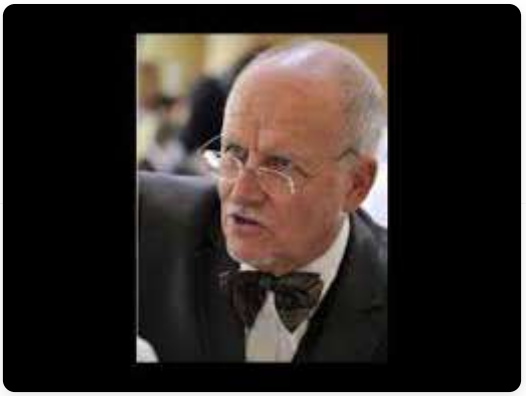
At all levels, including the LSAs, Bahá'í leaders are generally as authoritarian, if not more, than clergy from other religious faiths, which as Dale Husband points out, is one of the Four Ways to Create a Religion of Hypocrites :

1. State that religion no longer needs clergy..... and replace them with leaders that are as authoritarian as the clergy ever was .
2. Claim that men and women should be equal..... but then deny women

membership in the all-powerful leadership council of the religion.

3. Condemn as heretics those who believe in your religion but dare to challenge the claims of your religion's current leadership, while at the same time claiming to welcome as friends the followers of other religions.
4. Claim there is harmony between science and religion, but also claim that anything your leaders say is absolutely true , even if on topics science is expected to address.

Any one of these makes a religion not worth following, but what do you do if you find a religion that has all four such contradictions



Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1957, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote "People who have withdrawn from the Cause because they no longer feel that they can support its Teachings and Institutions sincerely, are not Covenant-breakers--they are non-Bahá'ís and should just be treated as such."

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> Haifa, Israel,
>
> March 30, 1957
>
> National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.
>
> The beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer certain matters raised in your recent correspondence with him.
>
> He is delighted to see that substantial progress is being made in Samoa. It is too early for him to say under whose administrative jurisdiction the Samoan Bahá'ís will come in the future. It will probably be Australia, but at the present time, these things have not been definitely settled.
>
> DEFINITION OF COVENANT-BREAKING
>
> People who have withdrawn from the Cause because they no longer feel

that they can support its Teachings and Institutions sincerely, are not Covenant-breakers --they are non-Bahá'ís and should just be treated as such. Only those who ally themselves actively with known enemies of the Faith who are Covenant-breakers , and who attack the Faith in the same spirit as these people, can be considered, themselves, to be Covenant-breakers . As you know, up to the present time, no one has been permitted to pronounce anybody a Covenant-breakers but the Guardian himself.

With warm Bahá'í greetings, and assuring you all of his prayers for the success of your important work,

R. RABBANI

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "Any believer who arises and leaves his home to journey to another country for the purpose of teaching the Cause is a pioneer. As you know, one of the objectives of every pioneer is to settle and become self-supporting, if possible..."

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> 1938. Pioneer Status Clarified: Who is a Pioneer?
>
> "The place of settlement of any pioneer depends on his circumstances. If therefore, he can not settle in the localities suggested by the receiving National Spiritual Assembly, this does not mean that he should not be considered a pioneer. Any believer who arises and leaves his home to journey to another country for the purpose of teaching the Cause is a pioneer.
>
> "As you know, one of the objectives of every pioneer is to settle and become self-supporting, if possible. If the localities where this condition can be met are not the same as the goals of the National Assembly, such goals may have to be filled by the National Assembly making use of homefront pioneers. The friends are free to go wherever they like and even those supported by the Fund should not be subjected to rigid rules."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, March 30, 1971)

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi cabled "position German Bahá'í community steadily deteriorating" warning of "granddaughter (of) SubhiAzal...mischiefmaking Orientals...sympathizers of Mrs. White or Sohrab or disloyal members (of) 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family, including my brother Hussein..."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 30. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi cabled "deeply grieved spiritual position German Bahá'í community steadily deteriorating" warning of several individuals including "granddaughter (of) SubhiAzal ...mischiefmaking Orientals...sympathizers of Mrs. White or Sohrab or disloyal members (of) 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family , including my brother Hussein ..."

> TRANSMIT FOLLOWING GERMAN ASSEMBLY DEEPLY GRIEVED SPIRITUAL POSITION GERMAN BAHAI COMMUNITY STEADILY DETERIORATING. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MUST ARISE LOYALLY VIGILANTLY ENERGETICALLY SAFEGUARD FAITH AND CONFIRM BELIEVERS IN COVENANTS BAHAULLAH ABDULBAHA. GRANDDAUGHTER SUBHIAZAL MUST BE SHUNNED ENTIRELY. HISTORY SOCIETY ACTIVITIES COMPLETELY DISASSOCIATED FROM FAITH. ANY MISCHIEFMAKING ORIENTALS MUST BE GUARDED AGAINST. SYMPATHIZERS OF MRS WHITE) OR SOHRAB OR DISLOYAL MEMBERS ABDULBAHAS FAMILY INCLUDING MY BROTHER HUSSEIN WHO MAY VISIT GERMANY THIS SUMMER MUST BE WATCHED AND WARNED AND IF NECESSARY EXPELLED. COMPROMISE INDECISION PROCRASTINATION WILL CAUSE CRISIS AS SERIOUS AS HERRIGELS . IF APPEAL UNHEEDED GREAT SUFFERING AND LOSS COMMUNITY WILL ENSUE THOUGH FAITH

WILL EVENTUALLY TRIUMPH.

SHOGHI RABBANI

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1987, the UHJ responded to five questions by Robert Stauffer regarding the loss of voting rights, Mani, Magi, the five-pointed star, and Joseph Smith and the Mormons. The letter concluded with quotations on Confucianism and Genesis.

Published on: March 26, 2026

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Five Questions: Loss of Voting Rights, Mani, Magi, Five-Pointed Star, Joseph Smith by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice published in Bahá'í Studies Bulletin, 4:3-4:4 1991-01 first written or published 1987-03-30 Department of the Secretariat 30 March 1987 Mr. Rob Stauffer

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

Your letter of 16 December 1986 was referred by the Universal House of Justice to the Research Department, which has prepared responses to your first and third questions. A copy of the Department’s memorandum is enclosed. In reply to your second question, we are instructed by the House of Justice to convey the following comments.

No reply has been found to the letter written by the Spiritual Assembly of Seattle to the Guardian in the 1930s, to which you refer. It would sees, however, from the general tenor of the many letters written by the beloved Guardian on the matter of deprivation of voting rights, that, in principle at least, there are no exceptions to the guidance given in the letter quoted on pp. 51-52 of "Messages to Canada", namely:

"...before anyone is deprived of their voting rights, they should be consulted with and

lovingly admonished at first, given repeated warnings if they do not mend their immoral ways, or whatever other extremely serious misdemeanor they are committing, and finally, after these repeated warnings, be deprived of their voting rights." There are, however, many different ways In which this is applied, depending upon the nature of the offence and the situation in each case. For example, when there is an isolated, but serious offence, such as that of a Bahá'í woman who indulges in one act of Immorality as a result of which she gives birth to a child out of wedlock, this is no grounds for the removal of administrative rights. But the Assembly, when it learns of the situation should certainly arrange for the believer to be met and consulted with, to assist her in her difficulties, to ascertain her attitude to the situation. If she has no regret for the offence and indicates that she feels free to repeat it in future, she will need to be educated In the teachings, counselled and, if she does not change her attitude, to be warned that a continuation of such actions would cause forfeiture of her administrative rights. If, however, she is contrite and is determined to lead a moral life henceforth there would be no question of sanctions. The same course would be followed with the man involved if he were a Bahá'í.

Another example would involve, not a single offence, but a continuing course of behaviour, such as flagrant and continuing violation of the law prohibiting the drinking of alcohol, or of involvement in political activities In such situations the Assembly should explain the law to the believer, urge him to obey it, encourage and assist him and warn him if necessary. If the response is favourable there would, again, be no need to deprive him of his administrative rights but, if the believer is obdurate or continues in his course of misbehaviour, he should, according to the circumstances of each case be warned and warned again, with increasing severity and, if this produces no amelioration, he would have to lose his administrative rights.

A third example involves the taking of a definite step which violates a clear law with which the believer is familiar. Offences against the Bahá'í If of marriage mostly fall in this category. For example, if a believer enters into the married state (e.g. by having a civil wedding) without having a Bahá'í wedding, he must be instructed to immediately rectify the fault. This can often be achieved by having a Bahá'í ceremony without delay; however, there may well be obstacles to the marriage, such as a parent's refusal to give consent. If this consent is not forthcoming, enabling a Bahá'í ceremony to be

held, the only solution is to have a divorce, and, pending this, the offender would have to be deprived of his administrative rights. This is not the place to go int all the complications that can arise in connection with breach of Bahá'í marriage law, but this example will suffice to illustrate the point that in such cases the deprivation of rights, while not being automatic, usually follows the offence more swiftly than in other kinds of offence.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, For Department of the Secretariat Enclosure M E M O R A N D U M To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 30 March 1987 From: The Research Department

QUESTIONS FROM MR. ROB STAUFFER Mr. Rob Stauffer has raised several questions in a letter dated 16 December 1986. These questions have been referred to the Research Department for Study. We offer the following information.

1. Maní

We have not been able to identify any reference to Man! in the letters written by or on behalf of the beloved Guardian.

1. The Magi

The Research Department has identified two references to the Magi in Tablets written by 'Abdu'1-Bahá. In one Tablet the Master expresses His hope that the recipient will be like tat heavenly star which guided the Magi to Christ. He states in the other that the Magi looked with the eye of truth and were able to discover the star which was an evidence of the birth of Christ. They were thus led to the Son of Truth.

1. The Five-Pointed Star as a Symbol of the Faith

As Mr. Stauffer is no doubt aware, a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual and published in "Bahá'í News" 228 (February 1950) on page 4 states:

Strictly speaking the 5-pointed star is the symbol of our Faith, as used by the Bab and explained by Him. A reference to the use by the Bab of the five-pointed star is made on page 69 of "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974). However, the Research Department has not been able to identify the explanation to which

Shoghi Effendi referred as the works of the Bab held at the World Centre are not as yet properly Indexed. 4. Joseph Smith and the Mormons

In addition to the extracts regarding Joseph Smith and the Mormons published on pages 379 and 380 of "Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File", comp. Helen Hornby (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983), we share the following quotations from letters written on the Guardian's behalf to Individual believers:

Joseph Smith is nowhere mentioned in the Teachings. Some, however, of the Mormon doctrines are very close in spirit to our own beliefs, and the Mormons should prove a group veil worth teaching the Faith to. (28 September 1941) As there is nothing specific about Joseph Smith in the Teachings, the Guardian has no statement to make on his position or about the accuracy of any statements in "The Book of Mormon" regarding American history or its peoples. This is a matter for historians to pass upon. (31 May 1946) Mr. Stauffer may wish to take note of the final sentence in the extract above. In his letters, Shoghi Effendi often advised friends who asked similar questions to refer to experts or authoritative books on that subject. Three extracts from such letters written on the Guardian's behalf are enclosed herewith. Regarding the Magi, the Bahá'í World Centre Library has recommended the article in the "New Catholic Encyclopedia", vol. 9 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1967), pp. 60-5, as a good theological treatment of the subject. Other sources which provide interesting information are:

"The New Encyclopaedia Britannica", 15th ed., s.v. "agi", vol. 7, p. 671; and s.v. "Zoroastrianism and Parsiism", vol. 29, p. 1079. "The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church", 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 858.

"The Maryknoll Catholic Dictionary" (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965), pp. 349-50.

"The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church", 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 620-1.

These sources — particularly the "New Catholic Encyclopedia" — also provide information on Mini and Manichaeism, as does an article by Daniel Keith Conner, "Mani and Manichaeism: A Study in Religious Failure", World Order, vol. 11, no. 2

(Winter 1976-77), pp. 36-45. For further Information on Joseph Smith and Mormonism, the Research Department suggests Mr. Stauffer consult:

William P. Collins, 'The Bahá'í Faith and Mormonism: A Preliminary Survey', World Order, vol. 15, nos. 1 * 2 (Fall 1980/Winter 1981), pp. 33-45; William P. Collins, 'The Bahá'í Faith and Mormonism: Further Reflections', World Order, vol. 17, no. 3 (Spring 1983), pp. 25-33;

and the sources cited therein.

Enclosure "As regards Confucianism; the Teachings contain no data on this subject, and the Guardian would therefore advise that you refer to authoritative books regarding the history and teachings of this Faith."

(From a letter dated 8 April 1939 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer) "Concerning your questions numbered 1, 2, 3, 6, about the Church and Christianity; as no detailed information is given in the Bahá'í teachings on these matters, the Guardian cannot answer you - this is for historians to prove and clarify."
(From a letter dated 1 April 1946 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer) "We Bahá'ís do not believe in Genesis literally. We know this world was not created in seven days, or six, or eight, but evolved gradually over a period of millions of years, as science has proved. As to where the idea of a seven-day week originated it is certainly very ancient and you should refer to scholars for an answer. "The Guardian suggests, if you want to be referred to works of reference regarding the early Christian Church, that you ask some university, or large library, to give you the names of suitable books to read."

(From s letter dated 28 October 19A9 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1997, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice about a possible a reference in the Kitab-i-Aqdas to the possible end of the Guardianship, and "the authority of the Hands to expel Covenant-breakers at a time when there was no Guardian alive."

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Kitab-i-Aqdas and the Expulsion of Covenant Breakers by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1997-06-04 Dear Bahá'í Friend, The Universal House of Justice has received your two emails of 27 and 30 March 1997 . . . It has instructed us to send you the following reply.

With regard to your question relating to the provisions of Paragraph 42 of the Kitab-i-Aqdas and your understanding of notes 66 and 67, we are asked to stress that the notes should not be extrapolated beyond their obvious meaning. Paragraph 42 does not explicitly refer to the office of successorship in the Faith; it deals specifically with the authority for the disposition of endowments. It has implications for the successorship inasmuch as it envisages the possibility of a break in the line of Aghsan before the election of the Universal House of Justice, and provides that, in such an eventuality, the matter of endowments should be referred to those "who speak not except by His leave and judge not save in accordance with what God hath decreed in this Tablet...".

Note 67 points to the events which actually took place following the passing of Shoghi Effendi before the election of the Universal House of Justice, inasmuch as, during that period, the affairs of the Cause were directed by the Hands of the Cause of God who

have neither interpretative nor legislative authority and, indeed, "speak not except by His leave and judge not save in accordance with what God hath decreed...".

As to the authority of the Hands of the Cause to assume the direction of the Faith following Shoghi Effendi's passing, the following points should be noted.

The letter which you quote, written on behalf of the Guardian on 31 March 1949, some two years before the formal appointment of the Hands of the Cause, stated that "The Hands of the Cause will have executive authority in so far as they carry out the work of the Guardian." On 4 June 1957, some six years after the appointment of the first contingent of Hands of the Cause, and but four months before his passing, the Guardian referred to the "TWIN FUNCTIONS PROTECTING PROPAGATING FAITH BAHA'U'LLAH" invested in the Institution of the Hands of the Cause by "VIRTUE AUTHORITY CONFERRED TESTAMENT CENTRE COVENANT", and stated: "TO ITS NEWLY ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY ASSIST NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES BAHA'I WORLD SPECIFIC PURPOSE EFFECTIVELY PROSECUTING WORLD SPIRITUAL CRUSADE PRIMARY OBLIGATION WATCH OVER ENSURE PROTECTION BAHA'I WORLD COMMUNITY IN CLOSE COLLABORATION THESE SAME NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES NOW ADDED."

Although the authority to expel Covenant-breakers had been conferred upon the Hands of the Cause in the Will and Testament, the Guardian had reserved the exercise of this authority to himself during his lifetime. In his last message to the Bahá'í world in October 1957, when he appointed the last contingent of Hands, he characterized them as "the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth, who have been invested by the unerring Pen of the Centre of His Covenant with the dual function of guarding over the security, and of ensuring the propagation, of His Father's Faith." He referred further to "their sacred responsibility as protectors of the Faith", designating them "high-ranking officers of a fast evolving world Administrative Order" and members of "one of the cardinal and pivotal institutions" of the Faith.

Equipped with such powers, and having been elevated to such a high position, the Hands of the Cause concluded that, among all the then existing institutions of the Faith, it was upon them, as Chief Stewards, that the responsibility for directing the

affairs of the Cause rested pending the election of the Universal House of Justice.

The body of the Hands of the Cause, at their first conclave, constituted a group of nine Hands to act as an executive nucleus and "conduct and protect the affairs of the Faith from its World Centre" [The Ministry of the Custodians, p. 39.] and "carry on from this Centre the provisions of the World Bahá'í Crusade".[The Ministry of the Custodians, p. 31.] These nine Hands were designated "The Custodians of the Bahá'í Faith" and, following legal advice, they immediately asked the twenty-six National Spiritual Assemblies operating at that time throughout the Bahá'í world to pass resolutions confirming their support of the Custodians, and to send letters to the World Centre pledging their allegiance. The text of the letters received are all published on pages 41 to 50 of The Ministry of the Custodians.

It was on such a strong foundation of doctrinal and legal authority that the Hands of the Cause, and the nucleus of nine Custodians in the Holy Land, could bring the World Crusade of the beloved Guardian to its consummation, protect the Faith from the divisive effects of Mason Remey's unfounded claim to the Guardianship, and call for the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963.

Another question concerns the authority of the Hands to expel Covenant-breakers at a time when there was no Guardian alive and, more particularly, to expel Mason Remey from among their own ranks. The House of Justice feels that the above survey of events which transpired after the passing of Shoghi Effendi will assist in clarifying the position in which the Hands found themselves at the time of Mason Remey's disclosure of his claim. Looking at the situation purely in terms of the wording of the Master's Will and Shoghi Effendi's messages, it is evident that the Will gives the Hands the authority to expel those who "oppose and protest" against the Guardian and, by implication, those who "disobey" him and "seek division". The Hands of the Cause concluded that the very advancing of a claim to the Guardianship in conflict with the spirit and letter of the terms of the Will was a repudiation of the terms of a sacred document, the very charter on which the institution of the Guardianship rested.

The objection raised by the Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi, in his cable of 12 May 1960 and his letter of 15 May, should be read in its proper context. This objection was

in response to the recommendation made by his fellow-Hand, Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, supported by Dr. Ugo Giachery, that the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land immediately expel three members of the National Assembly of France for supporting and disseminating Mason Remey's claim, at a time when Mason Remey himself had not yet been declared a Covenant-breaker, and when the Hands still hoped that his action was the result of a mental aberration. The view of Mr. Balyuzi was supported by Dr. Adelbert Muhlschlegel. During the months of April and May, messages were still being received from the National Spiritual Assemblies around the world, rejecting Remey's claim and reaffirming their support of the Hands of the Cause. Mason Remey for his part compounded his offence by continuing to circulate his claims to the Bahá'ís, calling upon them to withdraw their support from the Hands, whom he stigmatized as Covenant-breakers, and to cease pursuing the goals of the Ten Year Crusade. On 7 July 1960, by which time the full gravity of the matter had been clearly established, the Custodians wrote to their fellow-Hands throughout the world, outlining the situation, recalling the authority given to the Custodians by the Hands as a body to expel Covenant-breakers, commenting that at that time the possibility of Covenant-breaking by one of the Hands themselves had not been contemplated, and asking the Hands as a body to decide whether they supported the recommendation for the immediate expulsion of Remey, or wished this whole question to be postponed until the holding of the Conclave in October.

The response of the Hands was announced to the Bahá'í world in the cable of 26 July 1960: "ENTIRE BODY HANDS OBEDIENT PROVISIONS WILL TESTAMENT CENTRE COVENANT COMMUNICATIONS BELOVED GUARDIAN ENJOINING THEM PROTECT HOLY CAUSE ATTACKS ENEMIES WITHIN WITHOUT ANNOUNCE BAHA'I WORLD MASON REMEY COVENANT BREAKER EXPELLED FAITH...."

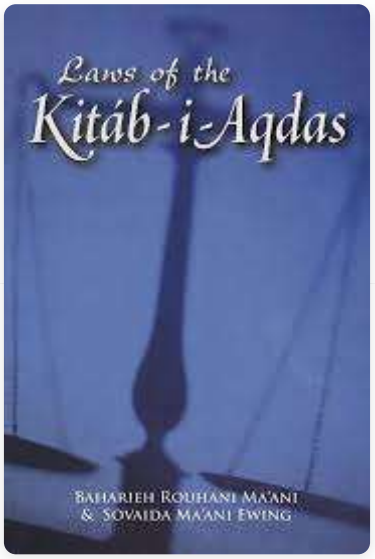
The hesitation of the Hands to expel Mason Remey, and the objections to precipitate action raised by Mr. Balyuzi and Dr. Muhlschlegel, should not be taken as lack of confidence in the Hands' authority to expel Covenant-breakers, but as a further evidence of the continual care exercised by the Hands not to overstep the bounds of their authority in any individual instance.

Mason Remey's subsequent acts showed the extent to which he would go in challenging the actions of Shoghi Effendi. For example, in a general letter of 12 November 1966 published in December 1966 he announced:

The first Guardian of the Faith so construed the Master 'Abdu'l- Baha's Will and Testament that he formed his Administration upon the Babi Faith and not upon the Bahá'í Faith. This mistake has caused so much confusion and misunderstanding and trouble that the only thing for the second Guardian to do, to set matters aright, is to discard all which Shoghi Effendi did and to institute a New Faith which shall be the Orthodox Faith of Bahá'u'lláh under the Holy Name of ABHA in order to carry out the conditions that will lead to the establishment of the TRUE Bahá'í Faith (of Bahá'u'lláh) which Faith has not yet been established in the world.

In another general 1etter dated 31 January 1967 he referred to "violations of the Faith that were made unwittingly by Shoghi Effendi". Subsequent developments are noted in a statement entitled "Mason Remey and those who followed him", of which we enclose a copy. . .

With loving Bahá'í greetings, xxxx For Department of the Secretariat cc: International Teaching Centre Enclosure, "Mason Remey and those who followed him" [online at uhj_mason_remey_followers].



Comments

No comments.

March 30 On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice wrote a circular letter to National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa explaining the prohibition on drinking alcohol and giving guidelines on how to approach and impose administrative sanctions on someone using it flagrantly.

Published on: March 26, 2026

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Alcohol, Prohibition of by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1997-03-30 Dear Bahá'í Friends, Ever since the launching of the Four Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice has noted, with deep satisfaction, the manner in which Bahá'í institutions and communities of the African continent have welcomed the spirit and letter of the broad lines of activity set forth in the Plan, and have particularly taken to heart its Ridvan message for 153 B.E. to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in Africa. As a supplement to that message, the Universal House of Justice wishes to convey the following comments to your National Spiritual Assemblies, and through you, to the body of believers in that continent.

The development of the teaching work in Africa has always been characterized by the receptiveness with which the truths of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh have been accepted and valued by the peoples of that vast continent, by the joy stemming from the pure hearts of the African believers as reflected in their radiant faces, and by their growing maturity in appreciating the importance of adherence to Bahá'í laws and ordinances.

One of these ordinances is the clear prohibition in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh of the consumption of alcoholic drinks. This has been explicitly revealed in His Most Holy

Book, the Kitab-i-Aqdas. He states, "It is inadmissible that man, who hath been endowed with reason, should consume that which stealeth it away. Nay, rather it behooveth him to comport himself in a manner worthy of the human station, and not in accordance with the misdeeds of every heedless and wavering soul." In other Tablets, we read from His glorious Pen, "Beware lest ye exchange the Wine of God for your own wine, for it will stupefy your minds, and turn your faces away from the Countenance of God, the All-Glorious, the Peerless, the Inaccessible. Approach it not, for it hath been forbidden unto you by the behest of God, the Exalted, the Almighty."

`Abdu'l-Bahá, adding His voice to that of the Blessed Beauty, has written, "The drinking of wine is, according to the text of the Most Holy Book, forbidden; for it is the cause of chronic diseases, weakeneth the nerves, and consumeth the mind." He has also written, "Regarding the use of liquor. according to the text of the Book of Aqdas, both light and strong drinks are prohibited." He further states, "Intellect and the faculty of comprehension are God's gifts whereby man is distinguished from other animals. Will a wise man want to lose this Light in the darkness of intoxication? No, by God!"

In answer to questions, Shoghi Effendi's elucidations, written on his behalf, provide further guidance on this subject. In these letters the habit of drinking is described as a "great misery" and a "great evil".

It was the policy of Shoghi Effendi, upheld by the House of Justice, that, in the early stages of the teaching work in countries whose people have for centuries been accustomed to the use of alcohol, the institutions should be patient and lenient, educate the friends, and allow time for them to extricate themselves from this pernicious habit before applying sanctions. This education has been an on-going process. Regretfully, however, it has been seen that in some cases, even among certain prominent believers, the friends have not freed themselves from this practice. Some may have wrongly thought that light alcoholic drinks, if taken irregularly, were permitted, without realizing the detrimental effect that their example was having on others. It is always most unfortunate when Bahá'ís of long standing, and even members of institutions at the national level, partake of alcoholic beverages, thus damaging themselves, harming the good name of the Faith in the eyes of non-Bahá'ís,

and setting a bad example for the rank and file of the believers.

The Universal House of Justice feels that it is vital, for the sound development of the Cause of God in those communities where there remains any doubt among the friends as to the importance of obedience to this law, that the National Spiritual Assemblies ensure that all believers are clearly informed of it. Of course, the Assemblies should not pry into the lives of individual believers; but in the case of any Bahá'í who blatantly violates the law, he should be counselled, assisted to overcome the habit, warned repeatedly of the consequences of continued disobedience, and ultimately, if he does not respond positively, be deprived of his administrative rights.

Furthermore, in order to protect the interests of the Faith, the Universal House of Justice has decided that, henceforth, any believer who occupies a Bahá'í administrative or teaching position on the national level and is seen to be consuming alcoholic beverages, should not only be counselled but should be removed from office during the process of the correction of his failing. If he does not give up drinking, he should lose his administrative rights; if he changes his ways, and the National Assembly is satisfied that he is obeying the law, he would regain his full rights. The positions the House of Justice has in mind are those occupied by members of the National Spiritual Assembly or any committee under its aegis, whether national or regional, by Bahá'ís who serve at the national office or in the training institutes at any level, and by travelling teachers and pioneers serving under the direction of the National Assembly or its subsidiary agencies.

It is the hope of the House of Justice that such a step will give a signal to the entire community that, whatever the inherited cultural practices or tribal customs may be, every effort should be made by each conscientious believer to obey the sacred law of God which forbids the drinking of alcohol. The friends must become aware that there are certain essentials of Bahá'í conduct that they cannot continue to disregard with impunity. Continued, blatant, disobedience to this law will, in the case of any believer, lead to consideration of deprivation of his voting rights. The friends should also realize that refusing to comply with this requirement will not only harm the offender and injure his family but will certainly impede his spiritual development and lead to the cessation of the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh -- confirmations and blessings

without which his life will eventually be brought down to misery.

Love for God is best exemplified not through words, but through deeds. "Let deeds," Bahá'u'lláh says, "not words, be your adorning." By obeying His laws we demonstrate our love for Him. He has also written: "My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish."

The guideline that Shoghi Effendi gave at the outset of the Ten Year Crusade, setting forth the manner in which the Bahá'í law on the need to abstain from alcoholic drinks should be explained while teaching the Faith to the people of Africa, is as applicable today as it was in 1953 when the Guardian's secretary gave the following advice on his behalf:

The question of impressing upon the Africans who are seeking enrolment the necessity of not drinking is a delicate one. When enrolling new believers, we must be wise and gentle, and not place so many obstacles in their way that they feel it impossible to accept the Faith. On the other hand, once accorded membership in the Community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, it must be brought home to them that they are expected to live up to His Teachings, and to show forth the signs of a noble character in conformity with His Laws. This can often be done gradually, after the new believer is enrolled. Every effort should thus be made by the institutions of the Faith, as well as by those who are directly engaged in the expansion and consolidation work, to make conscious and determined efforts to assist the new believers to realize the grave consequences of disobedience to God's laws, and to appreciate the bounties that flow from growing spiritually under the shadow of His Holy Cause. We are to assure you of the prayers of the Universal House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold, that you may be guided in the stewardship of your community as you strive to promote the vital interests of the Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, For Department of the Secretariat cc: International Teaching Centre Boards of Counsellors Counsellors in Africa

Citations for circular letter to National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa, 30 March 1997 [note: citation numbers were missing in the body of the copy of this letter I received. - J.W.] Paragraph 3, lines 3-7 The Kitab-i-Aqdas, paragraph 119 Para graph 3, lines 8-11 From a Tablet, translated from the Arabic

Paragraph 4, lines 2-4 Quoted in The Advent of Divine Justice (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1990), p.33

Paragraph 4, lines 4-6 From a Tablet, translated from the Persian

Paragraph 4, lines 6-8 From a Tablet, translated from the Arabic

Paragraph 5, line 3 15 February 1926, to an individual believer

Paragraph 5, lines 3-4 23 February 1946, to an individual believer

Paragraph 10, line 2 Hidden Words (Persian), no. 5

Paragraph 10, lines 3-5 Hidden Words (Arabic), no. 9

Paragraph 11, lines 6-14 cf., Unfolding Destiny: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'í Community of the British Isles (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), p. 308

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Mormons are a people with high principles and ideals...others not possessing their faith and devotion. However, the very zeal with which they serve their own Faith makes it difficult for them to grasp the greater vision of our Holy Cause."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 30. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Mormons are a people with high principles and ideals, and the step spiritually into the Cause is not as difficult for them as for many others not possessing their faith and devotion. However, the very zeal with which they serve their own Faith makes it difficult for them to grasp the greater vision of our Holy Cause."

> 30 March 1944
>
> To an individual believer
>
> Dear Bahá'í Sister:
>
> Your letter of February 20th, enclosing that of your husband, has been received, and the Guardian has instructed me to answer it on his behalf.
>
> He hastens to assure you that he will supplicate in the Shrines for that spiritual insight to be given to your husband which he is seeking with so much humility and sincerity.
>
> The Mormons are a people with high principles and ideals, and the step spiritually into the Cause is not as difficult for them as for many others not possessing their faith and devotion. However, the very zeal with which they serve their own Faith makes it difficult for them to grasp the greater vision of our Holy Cause. He hopes that Mr. . . ., so obviously a devout Christian, will, through study ing the Bahá'í teachings on Christ and the prophecies in the Bible concerning His Second Coming, and through a study of the life

and spirit of Bahá'u'lláh, come to see that Christ, far from being lost to Bahá'ís, is enthroned in their hearts more deeply than ever through recognizing Him in this new Manifestation.

He deeply appreciates the tireless devotion with which you are serving the Cause, and he will pray that your heart's desires may be realized and your husband feel moved, of his own free will, to join you in its service.

With warm Bahá'í love and greetings,

R. Rabbani

May the Beloved guide your steps, cheer your heart, guide your husband to embrace the truth of this Revelation, and enable you to promote its vital interests.

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1907, Ahmad Sohrab received instructions from 'Abdu'l-Bahá "that he may let the American believers know that if anyone, especially a Persian, comes to America without a Tablet of Permission no one must receive him as a Bahai; moreover, the Tablet must be in My own hand."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 30. On this date in 1907, Ahmad Sohrab received instructions from 'Abdu'l-Bahá "that he may let the American believers know that if anyone, especially a Persian, comes to America without a Tablet of Permission no one must receive him as a Bahai; moreover, the Tablet must be in My own hand." 'Abdu'l-Bahá repeated this three or four times. No one is to go to America "without the Permission of our Lord."

> Manshadi writes Sohrab on 30 March 1907 about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions "Write to his honor, Mirza Ahmad that he may let the American believers know that if anyone, especially a Persian, comes to America without a Tablet of Permission no one must receive him as a Bahai; moreover, the Tablet must be in My own hand."
>
> 'Abdu'l-Bahá repeated this three or four times. No one is to go to America "without the Permission of our Lord."
>
> Sohrab received a tablet from `Abdu'l-Bahá to the same effect a few days later. Raffie, Mazloom, and son are exempt. Fareed is coming to America with permission. Someone plans to come and make trouble, though.
>
> Tell New York and Chicago soon. And especially tell Mr. and Mrs. Getsinger
>
> .

Sohrab and Lua Gettsinger

Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1988, a Canadian Bahá’í wrote a letter to the Universal House of Justice raising "the issue of cultural diversity within the Bahá’í community" as well as "a number of questions concerning the rights of indigenous people such as the Natives of Canada."

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Comments

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March 30. On this date in 1933, Arnold Zonneveld was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands. He became a Bahá'í in 1961, and spent 22 of his next 23 years pioneering. He died on April 13, 1983 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, survived by his wife and six children.

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From "In Memoriam", published in *Bahá'í World, Vol. 18* ...

> ARNOLD ZONNEVELD
>
> 1933-1983
>
> > GRIEVED LEARN PASSING ARNOLD ZONNEVELD HIS DEDICATED OUTSTANDING SERVICES PIONEER FIELD MERIT GOOD PLEASURE BLESSED BEAUTY. KINDLY CONVEY MEMBERS HIS FAMILY CONDOLENCES LOVING SYMPATHY AND ASSURANCE ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
> >
> > Universal House of Justice, 5 April 1983
>
> Arnold Zonneveld was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands, on 30 March 1933 and died in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 13 April 1983. This exceptional Bahá'í of Dutch background was known to a very few of his fellow Dutch believers, for barely one year of his twenty-three years of life as a Bahá'í was spent in his home country. Arnold was the example of a born pioneer:

he gave up everything in order to settle in the most inhospitable places where he lived in primitive circumstances and devoted himself to the spiritual and physical well-being of his fellow man. Whether he had to endure bitter cold or terrible heat, whether alone and unmarried or responsible for a large family, Arnold understood the art of being satisfied under all conditions. We can rightly call him a true servant of God.

He was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Arnold van Ogtrop, and in 1961, while attending the International Summer School for Youth in Delft, the Netherlands, he met Paul Adams , the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Spitsbergen, and heard his account of life in that barren arctic region. Arnold decided to join Paul in Spitsbergen. He served there for three years, working as a hunter and later in coal-mines. The rigorous climate and hard working conditions affected his health and he had to leave. He returned to Germany and in 1965 married Gisela von Brunn . The following year, inspired by the talks given by Anna Grossmann at the German Summer School, they resolved to pioneer to Latin America. Bolivia seemed to offer the opportunity they sought to actively spread the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh among a receptive population. On 21 November 1966 they arrived in South America with their one-year-old son, Hilmar, and soon settled in Cochabamba.

Arnold's capacity to take up whatever work was available proved especially useful. He took on many projects — woodworking, business, agriculture, cattle breeding — and earned a wide reputation as a trustworthy and competent workman. It was not always a simple matter to earn a livelihood for his growing family and he suffered many setbacks. They received great moral and practical support from Gisela's mother, Ursula von Brunn , who joined them in Cochabamba in September 1967.

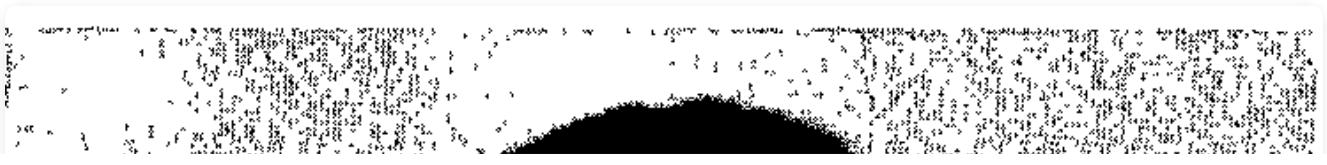
The Zonnevelds settled in the centre of the tropical jungle and savannah area, in the Department of Beni, where they located on a piece of land on the Rio Blanco and gave their home the name El Alba (Dawn). El Alba served well as a pioneer post because seven of the eight provinces of Beni

can be reached by rivers, there being virtually no roads or other amenities. Equally important, there is a city in the area, Costa Marques, Brazil. There were no Western comforts which meant that basic daily needs occupied a great deal of time, a circumstance which they deeply regretted. The Zonneveld family, which eventually numbered six children, adopted the local way of life as their own. Lumber was difficult to obtain. Although he had never thought he had a talent for technical things, Arnold developed two different guide-systems for chainsaws and began to fell trees and to saw planks. The sale of quality planks became the primary source of income for the family.

Their way of life aroused admiration and astonishment on the part of the native people and visitors alike. But the Zonnevelds found no solution to the problem of how to free themselves to devote more time to the Bahá'í Faith and to projects that would improve the living conditions of the local people. It was their dearest wish to establish first a primary school and later a trade school for the region, but their appeals for others to join them in the area and lend assistance went unanswered.

Early in 1983 Arnold fell ill. After a long bout of malaria it was discovered that he had a brain tumour which had already developed beyond the stage where it could be treated. On 13 April 1983 he passed away peacefully in the presence of his wife and their two oldest children, supported by the prayers of the Bahá'ís of Cochabamba and other centres. This servant of the Cause of God devoted himself to the service of a special race of people of whom he was very fond. Often the task seemed beyond his strength. His family prays that the effort expended in Cochabamba be not lost and that the promise of success be fully realized. May we remember in our prayers the one who has passed away and also those who live after him .

Extracted from a memoir by MARIJE FIENIEG-JONKERS (Translated from the Dutch by NANCY FOLKEMA)



Comments

No comments.

March 30. On this date in 1976, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong regarding an inquiry about books by William Miller, "There should be no attempt made to destroy or remove such books from libraries."

Published on: March 26, 2026

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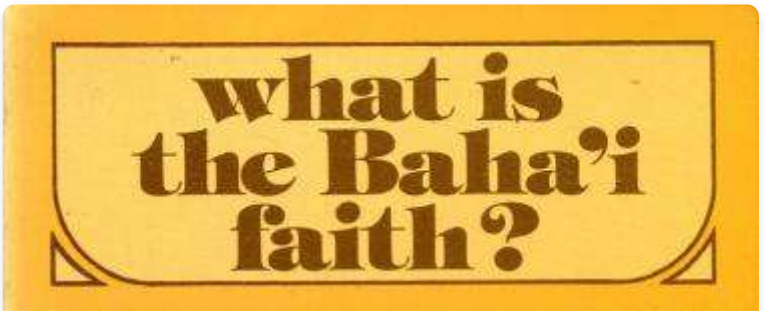
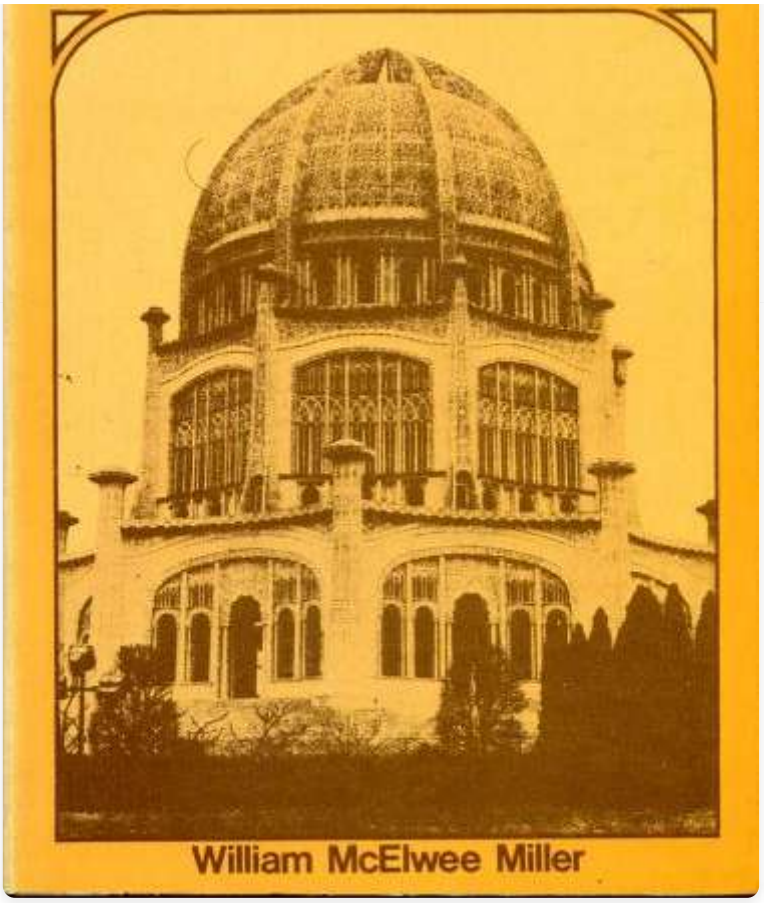
> In reply to your letter of 16 March 1976 (regarding books by William Miller) the Universal House of Justice instructs us to say that it is to be expected that books will be written against the Faith attempting to distort its teachings, to denigrate its accomplishments, to vilify its Founders and leaders and to destroy its very foundations. The friends should not be unduly exercised when these books appear and certainly no issue should be made of them. There should be no attempt made to destroy or remove such books from libraries. On the other hand there is no need at all for the friends to acquire them, and indeed, the best plan is to ignore them entirely.
>
> (From a letter dated 30 March 1976 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong)





Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1997, Frederick Glaysher, a Bahá'í of over twenty years who pioneered to Japan and an American Indian reservation, addressed a letter to the Universal House of Justice concerning authoritarianism by the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

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> March 31, 1997
>
> The Universal House of Justice of the Bahais of the World Haifa, Israel
>
> Dear Members of the Universal House of Justice:
>
> After careful reflection and prayer for the past few days, I've decided that open public discussion and knowledge are more important than my own status as a Bahai.
>
> I have been a Bahai for more than twenty years, since 1976. I became a Bahai by reading almost every single Bahai book published at the time. Given my background as a Catholic and poet, I was deeply moved by the beauty and profundity of the Bahai Writings. As a young person, I spent two months travel teaching throughout Michigan with several other youthful, innocent Bahais. Like many, I have sacrificed financially to contribute to the Bahai Faith. I pioneered for a year and a half in Japan, for two years on an American Indian reservation, and have travel taught in China. The spiritual profundity of the Bahai vision, as reflected in the work of the African-American poet Robert Hayden , inspired me to study at the

University of Michigan under him and to spend considerable time and labor editing his collected poems and prose for Liveright and the University of Michigan Press. I have published two essays in the Bahai magazine World Order and spent more time than I can remember at Bahai summer camps, workshops, and deepenings . Throughout all my varied Bahai experience, I have loved the Figures and Teachings of the Faith even as the conviction has grown that all information and discussion in the Bahai Faith is subtly manipulated, controlled, and distorted for the "good of the Faith." There seems to be a pervasive, rigid control of all thought, ideas, and information that calls into question the motives of the individuals in power in the Bahai Administration .

As a published writer and former college and university instructor of rhetoric and literature for over ten years, I believe the whole process of "review" has become a complete farce and disgrace to the Bahai Faith and is suggestive of the worst censorship under the most repressive regimes, religious or secular, of historical experience. If one truly wishes to understand why many Bahais, both highly educated and others, leave the Bahai Faith or become "inactive" and withdraw into silence and uninvolvement with the religion, one need only to look objectively at what seems to be the oppressive and coercive methods of people in the Bahai Administration itself to find the answer.

My experiencing of these same methods of censorship and distortion on soc.religion.bahai proved to be the last intolerable straw. My attempt to form an unmoderated newsgroup on the Internet that no one could manipulate and censor has a long experience of Bahai tyranny in the background. The resorting to deceit and back-channel communication by the moderators of soc.religion.bahai and others naively believing they're working for the benefit of the Bahai Faith by campaigning for 691 unethical NO votes on talk.religion.bahai further proves the pervasive acceptance of disreputable tactics by Bahais in their attempt to maintain a stranglehold over all thought and discussion.

Recently, more than ever, I've often recalled the words to me in private several times of Robert Hayden , the only Bahai to be appointed Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress : "Why I continue to have anything to do with the Bahai Faith, I do not know, I do not know." I myself no longer know.I suppose I hope that the oppressive, coercive methods that have come to be accepted and justified in the Bahai Administration, demonstrated for instance in the crushing of the magazine Dialogue, the incidents surrounding the Bahai Encyclopedia, the listserv Talisman I, and the continuingly crude, unreadable propoganda vehicle of the American Bahai, might yet be put aside in favor of the beautiful vision of Baha'u'llah and Abdul-Baha for freedom of religious conscience and belief and a humane, tolerant universalism . I fear that all too often the religious totalitarianism of Baha'u'llah's fanatical homeland has seeped into every nook and cranny of His religion, smothering out the free light of the human soul and hamstringing His Administration.

It was with the bitterest of feelings that I observed some time ago the Bahai exhibition, a deceitful propaganda event really, on freedom of religious conscience and belief sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly in the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., so far in reality from the truth was it, so misled, trusting, and uninformed were the Congressmen of my country....

If censorship is allowed in the Bahai Faith, I would like to know what passages of the Bahai Writings support it and what are the "rules," if you will, of Bahai censorship. It seems to me that censorship pervades the Bahai Faith so thoroughly that some Bahais regularly use it as a method of intimidation and silencing of anyone with an unconventional opinion by accusing the individual of being a covenant breaker. This tactic was used against me by at least three Bahais during the discussion period for talk.religion.bahai and tacitly condoned by the moderators and others.

I include, at the end, a threatening, coercive email message I received on March 27, 1997, from Mr. Hoda Mahmoudi , Auxiliary Board Member for

Michigan, at a crucial juncture of the discussion and voting for talk.religion.bahai and would like an explanation of his motives.

I, and perhaps the rest of the world, would greatly appreciate evidence that there are not now nine ayatollahs residing in Israel on Mt Carmel.

Respectfully,

FG

Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the validity of a Bahá'í marriage is conditioned upon the consent of the two parties and their parents only. So that in case the other members of your family show any dislike or opposition to your sister's union with ....."

Published on: March 26, 2026

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> ... the validity of a Bahá'í marriage is conditioned upon the consent of the two parties and their parents only. So that in case the other members of your family show any dislike or opposition to your sister's union with ....., their approval does under no circumstances invalidate it. Your parents' approval would be sufficient, even through all the rest of your family may violently oppose it.
>
> 31 March 1937 to two believers.

Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís "Bahá'u'lláh and the Master mention only Local, National and an International House of Justice.....Spiritual Assembly is the name at present for the body which in future will be called 'House of Justice'."

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> No. 2 The Hands of the Cause will have executive authority in so far as they carry out the work of the Guardian.

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No. 4 The Badí' Calendar will be used generally. The Bahá'í week has seven days.

No. 5 There is nothing about "ground organization". These details are left for future legislation.

No. 6 No. Such things are for the consideration of the legislative bodies in future.

No. 7 No. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated there are other worlds than ours which are inhabited by beings capable of knowing God.

No. 8 The Bahá'í Temple in America has been dragging on, uncompleted, since 19..(figures unreadable); its completion is absolutely essential. We are builders, we have confidence in the protection of God. We cannot give up our work just because the atom bomb has been invented! This would be cowardly! The United Nations disposes of millions and millions of dollars and part of its work is to educate humanity towards peace and against war. Our completion of the Bahá'í Temple will cost 3/4 of a million; what could this sum do in comparison to the efforts of the United Nations?

The thing the German believers must do is to deepen themselves in the Covenants of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Mere intellectual understanding of the teachings is not enough. Deep spirituality is essential, and the foundation of true spirituality is steadfastness in the Covenant.

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12. On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House

of Justice .

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality . The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching .

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandaráni of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice , noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the " House of Justice " had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

> Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá’u’lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá’ís will eventually evolve."
>
> (30 November 1930)

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

> 270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.
>
> "...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."
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> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male .

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Comments

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March 31. On this date in 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that...

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Horace Holley , as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and the New York Spiritual Assembly, had attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," which Ahmad Sohrab had founded in 1929 with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie , in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith.

Ahmad Sohrab had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter from 1912 to 1919. For example, aside from accompanying 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his tour of North America in 1912, on December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* , a collection of 14 letters written between September 1916 and March 1917 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as three of the "Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith.

The conflict resulted in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-

breakers around 1939.

Despite the failed litigation, in 1951, Shoghi Effendi appointed Horace Holley a Hand of the Cause of God.

The Administrative Order has repeatedly brought forth litigation related to issues centering on copyright and trademark. For example, on May 8, 2005, the Orthodox Bahá'ís, listed as the Second International Bahá'í Council, won a legal case brought against them by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States before the World Intellectual Property Organization (see WIPO Case No. D2005-0214) for the use of the domain name uhj.net.

On January 24, 1957, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly admonishing the Assembly that an unnamed individual "cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith."

> 1394. New History Society--Avowed Enemies of the Faith
>
> "As regards ..., he should be kindly but firmly admonished by your Assembly that he cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith."
>
> (From a letter of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 24, 1957)

On March 10, 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley" feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

To the Hand of the Cause , Mr. Horace Holley

March 10, 1958

Revered Bahá'í Brother:

The Hands in the Holy Land are sending a detailed answer to the questions raised in the letter of February 24, 1958 addressed to us by the American Hands and the National Spiritual Assembly.

We believe that the points covered in our letter also meet the request made in your separate communication of February 25 to your fellow Hands in Haifa.

Here, as you know, we receive letters from all parts of the world which reflect the approach of the believers of diverse backgrounds to the **problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing .** As a result, the Custodians have been made very conscious of the necessity to strive for unity in the approach to fundamental matters affecting the structure and future development of the Cause. The Custodians from East and West are aware of the wisdom of avoiding statements or points of view on basic issues which cannot be accepted equally by East and West, and indeed by all of the Bahá'í world, especially in this period, so soon after the ascension of the beloved Guardian, when **we are still unable to grasp the full implications of the present situation.**

It would have been a great help if you yourself could have served here in these early and critical months, and given us the benefit of your experience and clarity of thought on the many pressing issues with which we have had to cope.

You will now, we feel sure, understand our delicate position and the reasons why we felt it necessary to urge that the statement "A New Bahá'í Era" be withdrawn from circulation. Your fellow-Hands serving here are confident you will place this whole question and its world-wide implications before the members of your National Assembly in such a way that they will fully understand the reasons underlying the actions taken

here.

No doubt when the entire body of the Hands gather at our next meeting later this year we will have many things to discuss, and each one win have a greater contribution to make in view of this tragic year's experiences.

We all send you our devoted love and assure you that you are often remembered in our prayers.

Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Sohrab

Comments

No comments.

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> 1695. There Were No Followers of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh from the Far East During Their Ministry
>
> "As there were no followers of the Bab or Bahá'u'lláh derived from the religions of the Far East in Their days, this may be the reason that they did not address any Tablets directly to these people. Also we must remember that every religion springs from some root, and just as Christianity sprang from Judaism, our own religion sprang from Islam, and that is why so many of the teachings deduct their proofs from Islam."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 5, 1957)
>
> "The teachings bear no reference to any genealogical tie between the Prophets of the Near and Far East."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 31, 1941)

Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "The law of the Obligatory Prayers is, of course, binding on the friends in Europe, and regular, whole-hearted obedience to this law will in itself nourish the growth of spirituality. Nor should the friends neglect Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation to read...."

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March 31. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The law of the Obligatory Prayers is, of course, binding on the friends in Europe, and regular, whole-hearted obedience to this law will in itself nourish the growth of spirituality. Nor should the friends neglect Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation to read the Sacred Scriptures every morning and evening."

> 1840. The Obligatory Prayers and Reading Sacred Scriptures Every Morning and Evening Nourish Growth of Spirituality
>
> "The law of the Obligatory Prayers is, of course, binding on the friends in Europe, and regular, whole-hearted obedience to this law will in itself nourish the growth of spirituality. Nor should the friends neglect Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation to read the Sacred Scriptures every morning and evening."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, March 31, 1983)

desire, and wishing naught else except Thy good pleasure.
I implore Thee by the Ocean of Thy mercy and the Daystar
of Thy grace to do with Thy servant as Thou willest and
pleasest. By Thy might which is far above all mention and
praise! Whatsoever is revealed by Thee is the desire of my
heart and the beloved of my soul. O God, my God! Look
not upon my hopes and my doings, nay rather look upon
Thy will that hath encompassed the heavens and the earth.
By Thy Most Great Name, O Thou Lord of all nations! I have
desired only what Thou didst desire, and love only what
Thou dost love.

Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... believers must do is to deepen themselves in the Covenants of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá.... of the Teachings is not enough. Deep spirituality is essential, and the foundation of true spirituality is steadfastness in the Covenant."

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> 1841. The Foundation of Spirituality is Steadfastness in the Covenant
>
> "The thing the ... believers must do is to deepen themselves in the Covenants of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá. Mere intellectual understanding of the Teachings is not enough. Deep spirituality is essential, and the foundation of true spirituality is steadfastness in the Covenant."
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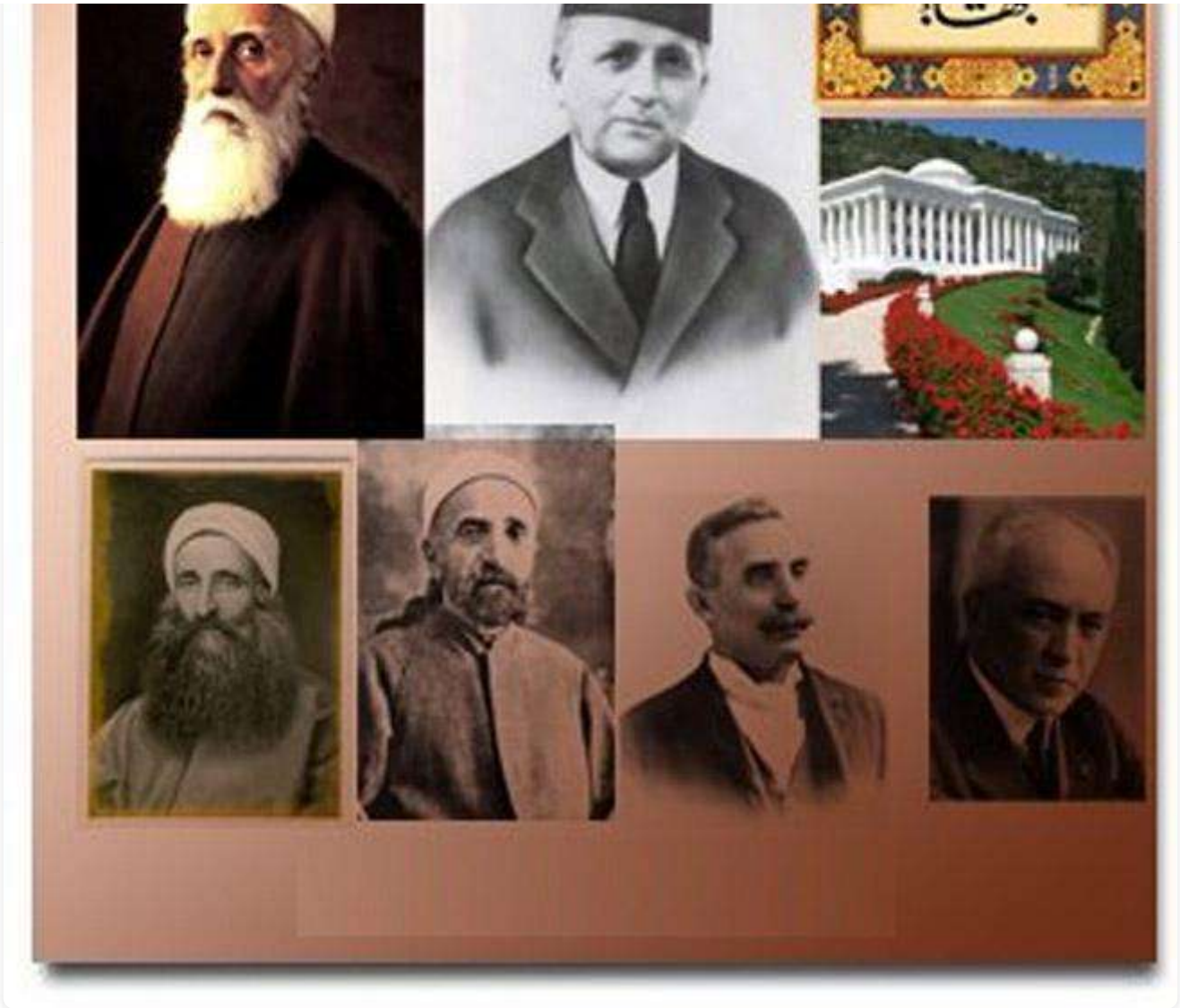
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 31, 1949)



Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote teachers "are only pure souls who take the first step, and then let the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh move them and make use of them....perhaps thrown aside by the Spirit of the Cause as useless souls."

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March 31. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote teachers "are only pure souls who take the first step, and then let the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh move them and make use of them....perhaps thrown aside by the Spirit of the Cause as useless souls."

> 65."Perhaps the reason why you have not accomplished so much in the field of teaching, is the extent you looked upon your own weaknesses and inabilities to spread the Message. Bahá'u'lláh and the Master have both urged us repeatedly to disregard our own handicaps and lay our whole reliance upon God. He will come to our help if we only arise and become active channel for God's grace. **Do you think it is the teachers who make converts and change human hearts? No, surely not. They are only pure souls who take the first step, and then let the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh move them and make use of them.** If any of them should even for a second consider his achievements as due to his own capacities, his work is ended and his fall starts. This is in fact why so many competent have after wonderful services suddenly found themselves absolutely impotent and **perhaps thrown aside by the Spirit of the Cause as useless souls.** The criterion is the extent to which we are ready to have the will of God operate through us. "Stop being conscious of your frailties, therefore; **have a perfect reliance upon God; let your heart burn with the desire to serve His Mission and proclaim His call; and you will observe how eloquence and the power to change human hearts will come as a matter of course.**

Shoghi Effendi will surely pray of your success if you should arise and start to teach. In fact the mere act of arising will win for you God's help and blessings."

(From a letter dated March 31, 1932 to an Individual believer)

Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1955, a letter stated "fireside meeting in the home. Every Bahá'í as a part of his spiritual birthright, must teach, and the one avenue where he can do this most effectively is by inviting friends into his home once in 19 days, and gradually attracting them to the Cause."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 31. On this date in 1955, a letter to the Bahá'í Group of Key West, Florida, stated "that the most effective method of teaching the Faith is the fireside meeting in the home. Every Bahá'í as a part of his spiritual birthright, must teach, and the one avenue where he can do this most effectively is by inviting friends into his home once in 19 days, and gradually attracting them to the Cause."

> 828. Firesides More Effective Than Publicity
>
> "...I would like to comment that it has been found over the entire world that the most effective method of teaching the Faith is the fireside meeting in the home. Every Bahá'í as a part of his spiritual birthright, must teach, and the one avenue where he can do this most effectively is by inviting friends into his home once in 19 days, and gradually attracting them to the Cause. After the individuals have confidence in the pioneer, and the pioneer in the individuals, then they can be taught and confirmed in the Faith. This method is far more effective than advertising in newspapers, public lectures etc. The Guardian is encouraging the believers over the world, including those on the home fronts, to engage in this method of teaching."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the Bahá'í Group of Key West, Florida, March 31, 1955: Bahá'í News, No. 292, pp. 9-10)

Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the validity of a Bahá'í marriage is conditioned upon the consent of the two parties and their parents only....Your parents' approval would be sufficient, even through all the rest of your family may violently oppose it."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 31. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the validity of a Bahá'í marriage is conditioned upon the consent of the two parties and their parents only. So that in case the other members of your family show any dislike or opposition to your sister's union with ....., their approval does under no circumstances invalidate it. Your parents' approval would be sufficient, even through all the rest of your family may violently oppose it."

> ... the validity of a Bahá'í marriage is conditioned upon the consent of the two parties and their parents only. So that in case the other members of your family show any dislike or opposition to your sister's union with ....., their approval does under no circumstances invalidate it. Your parents' approval would be sufficient, even through all the rest of your family may violently oppose it.
>
> 31 March 1937 to two believers.

Comments

No comments.

March 31. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "Shoghi Effendi... had asked the ladies of the household to prepare the pictures of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab for us to see. The picture of Bahá'u'lláh is a photo (in sitting posture at a table). A wonderfully powerful face."

Published on: March 26, 2026

March 31. On this date in 1925, Effie Baker wrote in her diary "Shoghi Effendi sent for all of us and told us he had asked the ladies of the household to prepare the pictures of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab for us to see. The picture of Bahá'u'lláh is a photo (in sitting posture at a table). A wonderfully powerful face. To me the eyes were half-closed but they seemed to search one's heart and involuntarily the words came to one's lips, Oh! God forgive me! The others are a series of three small paintings of him done by an artist (Persian) from memory depicting him in his youth, which did not appeal to me so much. The third, a painting of the Bab, is small, and depicts him in a praying attitude. It is a beautiful, quiet, spiritual face. The art is eastern in its conception and contrasting to western ideas."

> *Fifth interview with Shoghi Effendi 31 March 1925*
>
> Shoghi Effendi sent for all of us and told us he had asked the ladies of the household to prepare the pictures of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab for us to see. The picture of Bahá'u'lláh is a photo (in sitting posture at a table). A wonderfully powerful face. To me the eyes were half-closed but they seemed to search one's heart and involuntarily the words came to one's lips, Oh! God forgive me! The others are a series of three small paintings of him done by an artist (Persian) from memory depicting him in his youth, which did not appeal to me so much. The third, a painting of the Bab, is small, and depicts him in a praying attitude. It is a beautiful, quiet, spiritual face. The art is eastern in its conception and contrasting to western ideas.

The others were beautiful photos of the Master and one could there fully realise His majestical beauty, simplicity, and kindness of heart, showered to all creatures irrespective of race, colour, or creed. One who meekly withstood the onslought of the enemy bearing no trace of malice, showing naught but loving service to all mankind, from day to day, though many trials, tribulations and indignities were heaped upon him.

Comments

No comments.